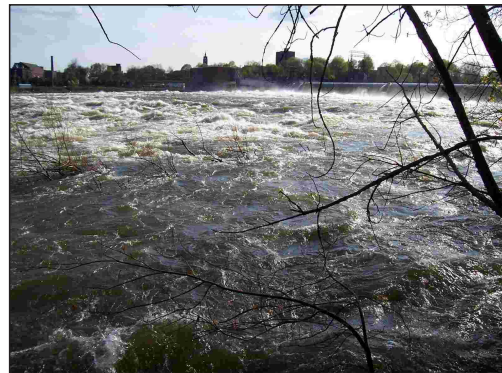
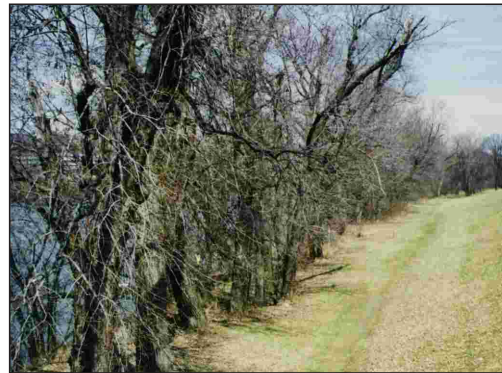

CONNECTICUT RIVER RECREATION MANAGEMENT PLAN



Prepared under a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
for the communities of Agawam, Chicopee, Longmeadow, South Hadley, Springfield,
and West Springfield

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
June 2005

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June 30, 2005

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INTRODUCTION



Connecticut Riverwalk, Agawam

Purpose

This plan is intended to promote improved recreational access to the Connecticut River for all types of activities, including boating, canoeing, kayaking, hiking, fishing, swimming, and wildlife enjoyment. Over the past decade, communities have invested over \$50 million in cleaning up the lower Connecticut River in Massachusetts, including abating combined sewer overflows. Unfortunately, during this same time period, many riverfront areas have been developed for commercial and other uses that do not provide for public access to the river. It is important for communities to maximize the benefits to the public of the considerable investment in improved water quality, by providing opportunities for their residents to enjoy the river.

Area Covered by Plan

This plan covers the Connecticut Riverfront areas of the communities of Agawam, Chicopee, Holyoke, Longmeadow, South Hadley, Springfield and West Springfield.

Planning Process

In developing this plan, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission staff sought input and guidance from many individuals, including municipal staff, Planning Board members, Conservation Commissions, Recreation Commissions, and sportsmen's groups.

A series of subregional meetings were held in South Hadley, Springfield and West Springfield. One set of meetings was held at the outset of the planning process, and a second set of meetings was held on the draft plan. Comments from town officials, sportsmen's groups, recreational user groups and the general public were incorporated into the plan.

Success Stories

In 1995, PVPC completed the "The Connecticut River 2020 Strategy", which identified a number of projects to improve river. This plan laid out a vision for the river, which included:

- Restore fishable and swimmable water quality in the river;
- Bring people back to the river;
- Restore fish and wildlife;
- Promote appropriate riverfront economic development;
- Plan for attractive, well-designed riverfront land uses;
- Educate people about the river's natural and cultural history, and;
- Promote cooperative action on riverfront revitalization.

The Connecticut River 2020 Strategy has been highly influential and successful in sparking a revitalization of the lower Connecticut River. Many of the projects identified in The Connecticut River 2020 Strategy have come to fruition or have been constructed over the past decade. Table One below outlines some of these success stories.

Study Area



Table One. Successfully Implemented Projects Recommended in Connecticut River 2020 Strategy

Project	Description	Status
Connecticut River Clean-up	Clean up of pollution from 132 combined sewer overflows in Springfield, Chicopee, Holyoke, Agawam, Ludlow, South Hadley and West Springfield	Intergovernmental compact signed by communities, PVPC. Congressional budget appropriation approved seven consecutive years 1999-2005, resulting in \$10 million in clean-up projects.
Connecticut Riverwalk		
Springfield Segment	Bikeway and walkway extending the length of Springfield riverfront for 3.7 miles	Construction completed in 2003. Now open to the public.
Agawam Segment	Bikeway and walkway extending the length of Agawam riverfront for 2.3 miles	Construction completed in 2004. Now open to the public.
Chicopee Segment	Bikeway and walkway along Chicopee riverfront for 4.9 miles	Design plans partially completed
West Springfield Segment	Bikeway and walkway along West Springfield riverfront for 2 miles	Design plans partially completed
Holyoke Canalwalk	Walkway and promenade along First and Second Level Canals in Holyoke	Design plans partially completed
Chicopee Riverwalk	Bikeway and walkway along Chicopee riverfront for 2.1 miles	Design plans partially completed

REGIONAL

RIVERFRONT RECREATION ACTION STRATEGY

Summary of Issues and Opportunities

The Connecticut River is New England's longest river, and the Pioneer Valley's most important natural asset. It is a designated American Heritage River. It is a highly scenic river running through some of the region's most densely developed urban areas, which has enormous potential for providing recreational benefits to the region's residents.

Over the past decade, over \$50 million in public taxpayers dollars have been spent on efforts to clean up combined sewer overflows on the Connecticut River. Key issues and opportunities to address in this plan are the needs to:

- bring people back to the Connecticut River;
- maximize public river access opportunities for fishing, boating, swimming, hiking and other uses, while they still exist;
- take advantage of public expenditures for cleaner water;
- protect and promote scenic and historic resources along the Connecticut River.

Table Two.
**Total Recreational Use on the
Upper Connecticut River, 1996**

Activity	Annual Days of Use	On-water Activity	On-land Activity
Motor Boating	49,290	X	X
Boat Fishing	32,379	X	
Fish Viewing	13,420		X
Camping	11,536		X
Picnicking/Sightseeing	9,262	X	X
Bank Angling	3,227		X
Jet Skiing	2,746	X	
Swimming/Sunbathing	2,450	X	X
Non-Motorized Boating	2,288	X	
Ice Fishing on Oxbow	580	X	
TOTAL	127,178		

Source: Louis Berger Group, Inc., 2000



Combined Sewer Overflow Separation Project under construction, Ludlow

Current Recreational Use

Recreational use on the upper Connecticut River in Massachusetts above the Holyoke Dam was estimated to be 130,000 recreation days in 1996 (Louis Berger Group, Inc., 2000). The most popular recreational uses in this area are motor boating (39%), boat fishing (26%), fish viewing (11%), camping (9%), and picnicking/sightseeing (7%). Other recreational uses are noted in the table below. The majority of recreational use occurs on weekends and holidays.

Other uses of the river, not included in table two, include the shad derby and use by college crew teams.

There is little available data on recreational use on the lower Connecticut River in Massachusetts, below the Holyoke Dam. Observation indicates that recreational use of this lower river segment is much lower than the upper Connecticut River. This is likely due to water quality concerns and the presence of sandbars and other navigational hazards for power boating.

In the “Holyoke Pool” area of the upper Connecticut River overcrowding has created a number of concerns. A survey of recreational users completed by the Berkshire Design Group in 1996 noted the following problems:

- A sense of crowded conditions on the water;
- Speeding and reckless driving;
- Management of the water level

It was noted that non-motorized boaters do not use the “Holyoke Pool” area due to boat wakes and potentially dangerous conditions associated with some boater’s behaviors. A majority of respondents supported the following methods to minimize conflicts between users and relieve congestion:

- Regulating areas for non-motorized boaters;
- A required course for power boaters;
- Additional environmental police.

Recreational users also noted ways to improve and enhance recreation opportunities along the river, including:

- Improve environmental maintenance;
- Make restrooms more accessible;
- Provide additional biking and walking paths;
- Provide interpretive signage which highlights the history and wildlife of the area.

The majority of respondents felt that river access was adequate. (*Berkshire Design Group, 1996*)

Recommended Regional Action Strategies

1. Pursue National Heritage Corridor Designation

In 1994, Congressman John Olver sponsored federal legislation to initiate a National Park Service study of the four-state Connecticut River area and its special combination of natural and historic features, to determine the feasibility of creating a National Heritage Area, trail or similar entity. A National Heritage Area could link key historical sites, conservation or recreation access areas, and points of interest along the Connecticut River.

The National Park Service completed their study, Connecticut River Valley Special Resource Study, in

1998. It concluded that historic sites in the four-state area were too dispersed to justify a National Heritage Area designation, and that a theme to tie the sites together was lacking.

However, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission proposed that a smaller National Heritage Area in the Springfield-Chicopee-Holyoke area could be feasible, with a tighter clustering of historic sites, and could be built around a theme of “Yankee Ingenuity”. This area has been the birthplace of a remarkable number of inventions, including the automobile, basketball, volleyball, and precision manufacturing techniques that contributed to the Industrial Revolution. Examples of key sites that could be included are:

- Springfield Armory
- Basketball Hall of Fame
- Volleyball Hall of Fame
- Holyoke Canal complex and historic mills
- South Hadley historic canal
- Cabotville Mills in Chicopee
- Holyoke Fish Ladder
- Springfield building where first automobile was conceived

An interpretive guide, driving tour and educational exhibits could direct visitors to a linked series of sites along or near the river.

National Heritage Area designation holds great promise for providing federal funding to protect and restore historic sites and environmental areas. It also would promote the Connecticut River corridor as an important and interesting tourist destination, and enhance the local economy.

In 2004, the Greater Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau convened a meeting of interested stakeholders to discuss options for pursuing National Heritage Corridor Designation. The group agreed to work together to rekindle efforts to seek National Heritage Area designation.

2. Clean Up Combined Sewer Overflows

In 1988, a study of combined sewer overflow on the lower Connecticut River found 134 outfall pipes, discharging 1.8 billion gallons per year of combined sewer overflows to the river. Cleaning up this problem has proved to be the most formidable environmental challenge facing the region. But there has been significant progress, and there is reason for hope.

In 1993, seven lower Connecticut River communities and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission signed an intergovernmental compact to establish the Connecticut

Table Three. *Status of Combined Sewer Overflow Clean-up*

Community	Number of CSOs in 1995	Estimated Total Capital Costs for CSO Clean-up	Number of CSOs in 2005	Federal and Local Clean-up Funds Expended
Agawam	14	\$ 2,691,000	0	n.a
Chicopee	39	\$140,000,000	30	\$12.5m
Holyoke	20	\$ 45,000,000	14	\$3.2m
Ludlow	10	\$ 6,960,200	1	\$0.3m
South Hadley	11	\$ 3,904,000	3	\$0.2m
Springfield	32	\$139,700,000	24	\$33.4m
West Springfield	8	\$ 5,240,000	0	n.a
TOTALS	134	\$343,495,000	72	\$49.6m

River Clean-up Committee. The CRCC was established to promote inter-local cooperation in seeking funding and strategies for cleaning up the river. The CRCC has been meeting over the past twelve years to address this problem, and has had considerable success.

3. *Complete Construction of 21-mile Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway*

The Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway is a pedestrian and bicycle path along the banks of the Connecticut River, connecting the communities of Springfield, Agawam, Chicopee, Holyoke, and West Springfield. The regional Riverwalk was conceived by PVPC in 1992 to revitalize the Connecticut Riverfront, restoring it as a focus of life in the region. Since then, several Riverwalk segments have been completed in Springfield and Agawam. When it is finished, the Riverwalk will stretch a total of 21 miles, and link Easthampton and Holyoke to Springfield and Agawam.

The Riverwalk creates a linear park or greenway along both sides of the Connecticut River in the region's urban core. It features:

- Paved paths for bicycling, strolling, jogging and rollerblading;
- Scenic overlooks of the river, a landscaped greenbelt, benches and bike racks;
- An urban promenade near downtown Springfield;
- Access to parks and nature trails.

In the future, as funding becomes available and water quality improves, additions to the Riverwalk could include:

- Vendor kiosks, public art and public gardens;
- Adjacent businesses to serve Riverwalk users, such as bike or boat rentals, restaurants;
- Boathouses for rowing shells, kayaks and canoes;
- Fishing docks;
- Public swimming beaches;
- Exercise and play spaces.

The Connecticut Riverwalk will provide many needed benefits to a population of over 591,000 in the Springfield-Chicopee-Holyoke metropolitan area, including:

- Dramatically increasing recreational access to the Connecticut River;
- Upgrading the scenery in blighted urban riverfront areas;
- Stimulating riverfront revitalization in downtown Springfield and other areas, attracting tourist facilities, restaurants, shops and museums;
- Providing opportunities for exercise and outdoor enjoyment in densely settled urban and suburban areas with no similar facilities;
- Reducing automobile traffic and emissions by offering opportunities to bike or walk to work, linking the region's urban core and employment centers to suburban areas;
- Establishing a key building block for creating an attractive and accessible urban greenbelt along the Connecticut River, linking parks, wildlife areas, and recreation facilities.



Connecticut Riverwalk, Agawam

Table Four. *Phased Construction of the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway*

Community	Segment	Miles	Construction Cost or Estimate	Status
Springfield	Chicopee city line to South End Bridge	3.7	\$3,483,000	Construction complete, open to the public
Agawam	River Road, from School Street to Chestnut Lane	2.3	\$1,631,000	Construction complete, open to the public
Chicopee	Plainfield Street to Nash Field	4.9	\$3,474,000	Engineering plans under development
West Springfield	Riverdale Center to Ashley Avenue	2.0	\$1,418,000	Engineering plans under development
Agawam	Bike Loop from Riverwalk to Main and School Streets	3.3	n.a.	Engineering plans under development
Chicopee	Chicopee Riverwalk	2.1	\$1,488,000	Engineering plans under development
Holyoke	Holyoke Canalwalk	n.a	\$9,200,000	Engineering plans under development
Future Phases				
Springfield-Agawam	South End Bridge Connector	.1	n.a.	To be completed
West Springfield	Bike lanes on Elm Street, others	n.a	n.a.	Feasibility study completed
West Springfield- Springfield	Memorial Bridge Connector	.1	n.a.	To be completed
Holyoke	Riverwalk – Holyoke segment from downtown to Easthampton town line	8.0	n.a.	Feasibility study completed
Chicopee-Holyoke	Bike lanes linking Riverwalk to Canalwalk	n.a	n.a.	To be completed
West Springfield	North End Bridge to Memorial Bridge	2.4	n.a.	To be completed

Regional Riverfront Recreation Action Plan

Recommended Action	Key Tasks/Milestone(s)	Participants/Costs/Funding
1) Pursue National Heritage Corridor Designation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Organize partners to collaborate in seeking Heritage Corridor designation. b) Secure federal funding to undertake a new National Heritage Corridor study. c) Seek Congressional approval for Heritage Corridor designation. 	<p>Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater Springfield Visitors and Convention Bureau Springfield Armory National Park Service Pioneer Valley Planning Comm. Area businesses and cultural attractions <p>Cost estimate: Unavailable</p> <p>Funding Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal budget appropriation National Park Service
2) Clean Up Combined Sewer Overflows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Continue to work through the Connecticut River Clean-up Committee to secure federal funding appropriations to fund clean-up projects, and to increase federal funding levels. b) Seek additional funds from the state legislature, through the state's Environmental Bond Bill or Infrastructure Bond Bill or similar financing options. c) Seek community matching funds through establishing Stormwater Utilities, or other innovative financing mechanisms. d) Amend the intergovernmental compact for Connecticut River Clean-up to address urban stormwater runoff problems. e) Involve citizens more actively in the CSO issue, through a volunteer water quality monitoring program, interactive website, and public outreach materials. 	<p>Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecticut River Clean-up Committee <p>Cost estimate: \$300 million</p> <p>Funding Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal budget appropriations Community matching funds Stormwater utilities State SRF funds State bond funding
3) Complete Construction of Connecticut River Walk and Bikeway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Complete design and engineering plans for West Springfield, Chicopee, and Agawam segments. b) Secure construction funds for each segment. c) Work with MHD to secure approval for key Riverwalk links, particularly across South End Bridge. d) In Riverwalk designs, retain access for boaters and anglers to the river. e) Seek approval from Mass. Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to assume ownership and maintenance of the Connecticut Riverwalk and related facilities, as part of Connecticut River Greenway State Park. 	<p>Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pioneer Valley Planning Comm. City of Agawam Town of West Springfield City of Chicopee MassHighway Department <p>Cost estimate: Unavailable</p> <p>Funding Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation Enhancement funds MassHighway Department Community matching funds

Actions Taken to Date:

1) Pursue National Heritage Corridor Designation:

- An initial feasibility study, the Connecticut River Valley Special Resource Study of 1998, has been completed, commissioned by Congress and completed by the National Park Service.
- Interested groups from the business, tourism and planning community have met to discuss next steps.

2) Clean Up Combined Sewer Overflows

- The Connecticut River Clean-up Committee was formed through an Intergovernmental Compact approved by seven communities and PVPC in 1993.
- An alliance with state of Connecticut CSO communities, including Hartford, has been established, through the Interstate Coalition for CSO Clean-up of the Connecticut River.
- The Connecticut River Clean-up Committee has been successful in securing a federal budget appropriation for CSO clean-up, which has been funded for seven consecutive years, resulting in over \$10 million worth of CSO clean-up projects.

3) Complete Construction of Connecticut River Walk and Bikeway

- Construction of the Connecticut Riverwalk segments in Springfield and Agawam has been completed, and these segments are open to the public.
- Design and engineering plans have been partially completed for the Connecticut Riverwalk segments in West Springfield, Chicopee and Agawam, and for the Chicopee Riverwalk.
- Preliminary discussions with the Mass. Department of Conservation and Recreation have been held to consider DCR assuming ownership and management of the Connecticut Riverwalk.

AGAWAM

RIVERFRONT RECREATION ACTION STRATEGY



Connecticut Riverwalk, Agawam

Summary of Issues and Opportunities

Agawam is located at the confluence of the Connecticut River and its major tributary, the Westfield River. The presence of two significant rivers in Agawam may have been the impetus for the first colonial settlement in the Pioneer Valley in 1635. The town began as an agricultural community and later became more urbanized. Agawam is now a largely suburban community with some remaining agricultural areas.

Agawam's Connecticut River frontage includes approximately 1.8 miles of town-owned open land with a rest area, and the town owns a 3.5 acre parcel at the confluence of the Westfield and Connecticut Rivers called Pynchon Point Park. The town also has significant Westfield River frontage which includes ownership of a small parcel of land right across from the town hall and middle school, and to the west it is bordered by Robinson State Park.

The following section describes issues and opportunities for riverfront revitalization in Agawam:

Pynchon Point Park

Of the town's riverfront areas, Pynchon Point Park has the most need for revitalization efforts. It is a 3.5-acre, mostly wooded area which juts out into the confluence of the Westfield and Connecticut Rivers. It is adjacent to state-owned property at the west side of the South End bridge (Route 5). Pynchon Point Park currently functions as fishing access area and an informal small boat access area.

Pynchon Point Park is natural and scenic at the water's edge, but the section adjacent to River Road contains an old parking area in poor repair with Jersey barriers barricading the entrance to the park. Access to the river for small boats is limited by the barriers and the inadequate parking area. In addition, an adjacent unscreened industrial area detracts from the park's natural character. These unattractive elements and obstacles prevent residents and visitors from appreciating Pynchon Point Park's beauty. Signage is needed that informs potential park users that the area is a park and small boat access.

This park, located at the confluence of the Connecticut and Westfield Rivers, provides great views and is well suited for river access. According to the Town's 2001 Open Space and Recreation Plan, the property is well suited for a boat landing and fishing. The Pynchon Point Park area was targeted as a riverfront site with potential for revitalization by Agawam in its current open space plan, and the CONNECTICUT RIVER 2020 STRATEGY. This area was identified in the 2004 Agawam Community Development Plan as a Scenic and Unique resource. Recently, this property has become a popular dumping ground due to the creation of an adjacent parking lot on state-owned land.

Public Access Along Connecticut Riverwalk

The completion of construction and opening of the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway in 2004 has created new opportunities for the public to enjoy and recreate along the Connecticut River. The Riverwalk is fully handicapped accessible. However, the Riverwalk's continuous safety railing, required as part of the federal/state grant funding for the project, could restrict access to the riverbank, if openings are not created for such access.

Recommended Action Strategies

1. Pynchon Point Park Enhancements

The Pynchon Point Park area was targeted as a riverfront site with potential for revitalization by Agawam in its current open space plan, and the CONNECTICUT RIVER 2020 STRATEGY. The park should be improved by attention to several of its small but significant components and by the following actions:

- Removal of Jersey barriers at the entrance and addition of a more attractive fence or wall;
- Addition of picnic facilities, fishing platform, handicapped access trail, walking trail loop, and landscaping;
- Reconfiguration of the parking, including a landscaped island;
- Screening of any unattractive abutting areas;
- Improvement of a limited access for canoes and kayaks;
- Addition of a descriptive sign at the entrance;
- Work with abutting landowners to seek trail easements along Westfield River; and,
- Work with private property owner on west side of park to install fence and screening for trailers and trucking business.

Upgrading Pynchon Point Park benefits the town's residents as well as visitors from throughout the region.



Trucks parked along trail, Pynchon Point, Agawam



School Street Riverwalk Loop Site, Agawam

The park should be connected to the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway.

The town of Agawam's Planning Department, Conservation Commission, and Engineering Department and a local volunteer, previously developed a potential site plan for a revitalized Pynchon Point Park. The plans include construction of handicapped accessible walkway from the state-owned parking lot down to the Connecticut River.

The Town of Agawam, the Westfield River Watershed Association, International Paper, and other volunteers have previously indicated interest in working on the project. The Town, PVPC, and WRWA should pursue funding to develop this parcel for recreation and river access. The town may also use local Community Preservation Act funds, coupled with volunteer efforts, for these improvements.



View of confluence of Westfield and Connecticut Rivers, Pynchon Point, Agawam



Park dedication plaque and jersey barrier, Pynchon Point, Agawam



Connecticut Riverwalk, Agawam

2. *Fishing and Canoe Access Along Connecticut Riverwalk*

The Town of Agawam should create passageways through the Connecticut Riverwalk safety railing at various locations to provide access to the riverbank for fishing, canoeing, kayaking, hiking and other river-oriented recreation activities. Locations for access should be identified in consultation with local fishermen and river users.

3. *Agawam Bikeway Loop*

This bikeway loop is currently in the 25% design stage. When complete, this loop will run along portions of Main Street and School Street where it will join the Agawam Riverwalk at both end points.

4. *Agawam Meadows Wildlife Area*

The City of Agawam should work with the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to protect the 250 acres of prime wildlife habitat at the confluence of the Westfield and Connecticut Rivers, possibly as part of the Conte National Wildlife Refuge, or a Connecticut River state park.



School Street Park Site, Agawam

5. *Develop School Street – River Road Town Park*

Agawam plans to develop a new \$4 million town park on former county property near the Connecticut Riverwalk. A master design plan for this property was completed by the Berkshire Design Group. This design includes a wetland boardwalk with overlook, soccer and baseball fields as well as 1.5 miles of bike path and parking for the Connecticut Riverwalk. The town plans utilize \$665,000 in CPA money for the first phase of construction, with local business contributions. The town could pursue DCR self-help money to fund portions of this park.

Agawam Riverfront Recreation Action Plan

Recommended Action	Key Tasks/Milestone(s)	Participants/Costs/Funding
1) Clean Up and Improve Pynchon Point Park: Pynchon Point Park needs a coordinated effort to clean up, improve and reconstruct the area. Several organizations are willing to participate in the park's revitalization.	a) Create site plan for new park: parking area with island; fence; fishing platform; guardrail; picnic area; paved handicapped access trail, stone dust loop trail; screening of abutting areas. b) Seek approval from abutting landowners for trail easements along river. c) Contact potential contributors of materials or equipment d) Contact Agawam departments (Planning, Conservation, Health) to meet necessary requirements. e) Contact MHD regarding removal of Jersey barriers. f) Contact civic and environmental groups to volunteer for work day. g) Coordinate a work day to remove pavement; grade new parking area; add island with plantings to parking area; pick up trash; construct trail and guardrail. h) Develop a long-term maintenance plan and budget for the park.	<i>Participants:</i> Agawam Engineering Dept. Agawam Planning Dept. Agawam Conservation Commission PVPC WRWA MassHighway Department <i>Cost estimate:</i> Unavailable <i>Funding Sources:</i> Public Access Board Town of Agawam - Community Preservation Act funds MassHighway Department In-kind contributions
2) Fishing and Canoe Access Along Connecticut Riverwalk	a) Create breaks in the Riverwalk safety railing at various locations to provide access for fishing, kayaking, canoeing, hiking	<i>Participants:</i> City of Agawam <i>Cost estimate:</i> Task to be completed by town DPW <i>Funding Sources:</i> City of Agawam
3) Agawam Bikeway Loop	a) Complete design and engineering plans for Bikeway Loop b) Seek construction funding for project	<i>Participants:</i> City of Agawam PVPC <i>Cost estimate:</i> Unavailable <i>Funding Sources:</i> ISTEA Enhancement grant City of Agawam
4) Agawam Meadows Wildlife Refuge	a) Meet with landowners to discuss long-term protection plans b) Seek funding for public acquisition of property, possibly as part of the Conte Wildlife Refuge or state wildlife refuge c) Create long-term management plan for area, including possible continuation farming, creation of a wildlife sanctuary and outdoor classroom.	<i>Participants:</i> City of Agawam Mass. Department of Fish and Game U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service <i>Cost estimate:</i> Unavailable <i>Funding Sources:</i> City of Agawam Mass. Dept. of Fish and Game U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Agawam Riverfront Recreation Action Plan (continued)

Recommended Action	Key Tasks/Milestone(s)	Participants/Costs/Funding
5) Develop School Street— River Road Town Park	a) Develop a park, including walkway/ bikepath, soccer and softball fields, picnic areas, playground, bocce and shuffleboard courts, community event space, restrooms and concessions, at the town-owned School Street – River Road site. b) Seek approval for use of CPA funds for construction. c) Seek an Urban Self-help grant for final phase of construction.	<i>Participants:</i> City of Agawam <i>Cost estimate:</i> \$4 million total \$1.5 million for Phase One <i>Funding Sources:</i> Community Preservation Act funds Urban Self-help grant

Actions Taken to Date:

1) Improvements to Pynchon Point Park:

- Meetings with representatives from Agawam Planning Department, Conservation Commission and PVPC to plan park improvements
- Draft conceptual plan developed by volunteer architect
- Discussions with Westfield River Watershed Association, International Paper, and other volunteers to solicit involvement in work day and improvements to the park. These groups have indicated interest in working on the project.

2) Fishing and Canoe Access Along Connecticut Riverwalk:

- Town officials and PVPC have identified desirable locations for river access for fishing, kayaking, and other river-oriented recreation.

3) Agawam Bikeway Loop:

- PVPC and Town have received a MHD Enhancement grant for \$62,200 to undertake engineering and design of Agawam Bikeway Loop.
- Engineering and design work have begun and the Agawam Bikeway Loop is at 25% design stage .

4) Agawam Meadows Wildlife Area:

- No work to date.

5) Develop Agawam Town Park

- In 2001, Agawam engaged Berkshire Design Group, Inc. to complete a Recreation Master Plan for the School Street/ River Road park site. The completed plan lays out multiple recreation uses for the site.

Westfield River

**Understory
vegetation for
bank stabilization**

**Handicap
accessible
fishing platform
and canoe
launch**

**Spur Trail -
connection to
Connecticut Riverwalk**

**Solid fence
for screening
commercial
business**

**Handicap
accessible
ramp**

Loop Trail

CONNECTICUT RIVER

Crosswalk

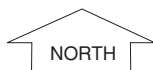
**Parking lot for
30 vehicles**

MEADOW

Sidewalk

CENTURY STREET

STREET



PYNCHON POINT

AGAWAM, MA

Approximate Scale: 1 inch = 130 feet

CHICOPEE

RIVERFRONT RECREATION ACTION STRATEGY



Connecticut Riverwalk Site, Chicopee

Summary of Issues and Opportunities

Chicopee is a small city with several distinct neighborhoods, including Willimansett, Chicopee Falls, and Chicopee Center located along the eastern bank of the Connecticut River. The Chicopee River flows westerly through the city to its confluence with the Connecticut River.

Chicopee has historically developed around an agricultural and manufacturing-based economy. Throughout the 1600s, agriculture was dominant in Chicopee. During the 1800s, it became possible to create power from the waters of the Chicopee River and mill complexes such as the current Cabotville Industrial Park and Ames Manufacturing Company were developed taking advantage of the water power. Once known as Willimansett, the areas of Chicopee Center and Chicopee Falls, just inland of the Connecticut River, became centers of industry, housing and commerce.

Chicopee has miles of beautiful river frontage, but very little public access to either the Connecticut River or the Chicopee River, with the exception of the state boat ramps on the

Connecticut River at Medina Street and Syrek Street. Access has been reduced in recent years, with the construction of a new public library on the banks of the Chicopee River which includes a large fence restricting river access, and a new fence closing off the Connecticut and Chicopee River confluence area to public access.

Chicopee has been actively working to mitigate combined sewer overflows. However, more work is needed to open the rivers up to the public. The following sections describe issues and opportunities for riverfront revitalization in Chicopee:

Access to the Connecticut Riverfront

Chicopee currently has very little public access to the Connecticut River. Along the northern and central portions of the Connecticut Riverfront in Chicopee, there is open land owned by the Public Access Board, Northeast Utilities and the City of Chicopee which abuts primarily residential areas. It is fortunate that the riverfront in this section escaped development of a major roadway and has a dike which can serve as a route for cyclists and pedestrians. The

Connecticut River dike runs continuously from Nash Field, a city park, south to the confluence of the Connecticut and Chicopee Rivers. The city-owned land along the dike is a beautiful natural environment with many possibilities for outdoor enjoyment, biking, walking and wildlife viewing. It has been targeted to become a major component of the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway.

Abandoned Rail Line along Chicopee River

The abandoned B&M rail line located on the southern bank of the Chicopee River has potential for being an easily accessible recreation and travel route. This old rail right-of-way-can potentially connect Chicopee Falls and other neighborhoods with Chicopee Center, and create a linkage between the Connecticut River and Chicopee's major park — Szot Park. The city owns portions of the route and would need to purchase or obtain easements for other sections that are currently privately-owned.

Opportunity for Protection of Riverfront Corridors Including City and Utility-Owned Land

The segment of Chicopee-owned riverfront along the Connecticut River adjacent to the South Hadley border is a potential link between the two communities and a possible conduit for the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway. There are many possible trail loops that could be developed by removing obstacles or creating links between the trail that exists and neighboring city streets or the utility corridors. Efforts should be made to develop these trails.

Opportunity for Connecticut Riverwalk on City Land and Other Private Land

There is an opportunity to link the Connecticut Riverwalk across the Chicopee River, perhaps via a new pedestrian and bicycle bridge, and south to the city of Springfield's flood control dike system. This linkage would need to be made along I-391, or the Guilford rail line, or as bike lanes on city streets.

Improvements to State Boat Ramps

Chicopee has two state operated boat ramps on the Connecticut River. One ramp is accessed from Medina Street close to the Chicopee and Connecticut River confluence area, and the other from Syrek Street at the Chicopee/ South Hadley town line. Currently, these are uninviting, utilitarian areas. Improvements are needed.

Connecticut River Dike System Changes

Access to the Connecticut River in Chicopee is limited by three miles of flood protection dike constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers following a severe flood in 1936. Flood protection technology has advanced since the construction of the dike. River access would be improved if the dike could be safely reduced in height.

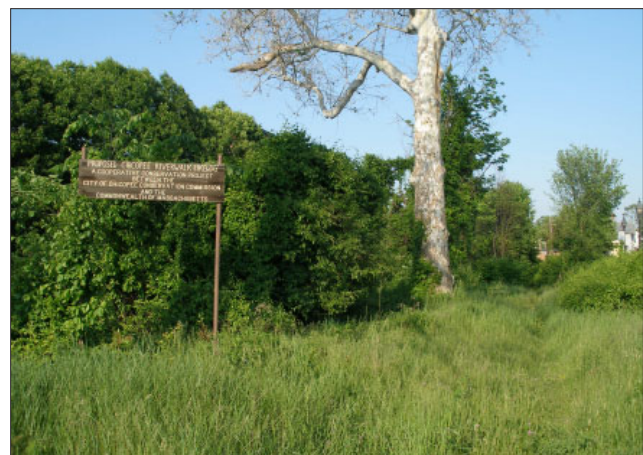
Recommended Action Strategies

There are several potential revitalization sites along both the Connecticut and Chicopee Rivers. One significant project area is the abandoned B & M rail right-of-way along the Chicopee River. The city of Chicopee owns a fishing area on the northern bank of the Chicopee along Granby Road, and also owns riverfront property on the eastern bank of the Connecticut close to the South Hadley border.

1. Chicopee Riverwalk and Bikeway

The Chicopee Riverwalk and Bikeway would be a great addition to the community for recreation, river access, commuting, access to several centers in the city, and river protection. The 1.5 mile Chicopee Riverwalk and Bikeway route will connect the proposed Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway route to key destinations including Szot Park, the new public library, City Hall and the high school. In addition, it links Chicopee center with Chicopee Falls and creates an alternative travel route through the city of Chicopee. In 1995, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and the City of Chicopee secured an ISTEA grant of \$94,000 to complete engineering and design plans for the Chicopee Riverwalk. An engineering design consultant has completed 25% design plans for the project, and the project received very strong public support at 25% public design hearing. However, the design has not been completed to date, due to the city's difficulties in securing the needed right-of-way. The estimated construction cost for this project is \$850,000.

The Chicopee Riverwalk route follows an abandoned railroad bed. It begins at the Depot and Front Street intersection where it would be linked with the proposed Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway. The route continues easterly along Front Street down to the abandoned B & M rail line along the southern bank of the Chicopee River to the Chicopee Industrial Park. Linked side trails and access points will connect with Szot Park and the new public library.



Chicopee Riverwalk Site, Chicopee



Connecticut Riverwalk Site, Chicopee

2. *Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway*

Chicopee is an opportune location for a portion of the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway. Construction of Connecticut Riverwalk segments in Springfield and Agawam have been completed. In 1995, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and the City of Chicopee secured an ISTEA grant of \$289,049 to complete engineering and design plans for the Connecticut Riverwalk segment in Chicopee. An engineering design consultant has completed 25% design plans for the project. Chicopee should actively pursue implementation of its segment of this regional facility.

The 4.9 mile Connecticut Riverwalk route begins at the Springfield-Chicopee city line and travels north to the confluence of the Chicopee and Connecticut Rivers. After crossing the Chicopee River, the route crosses under the Massachusetts Turnpike and travels north along the city's dike system on the eastern bank of the Connecticut River to Nash Park. There may be potential for continuing the route north to Holyoke or South Hadley using bike lanes on city streets. The estimated construction cost for this project is \$2,533,400.

3. *River Confluence Wildlife Refuge (Old Power Plant Site)*

The City should actively pursue protection of the 150-acre land parcel at the confluence of the Chicopee River and Connecticut River, and its inclusion in the Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. This site was originally the location of the Chicopee power plant, which was in operation until 1964, and was demolished in the 1990's. The city proposed that the site become a Rainforest Museum, and later proposed it as a part of the Conte Wildlife Refuge, but this did not occur, due in part to the need to remediate chemical contamination on the site. Although this site was not selected as a location for a Conte Refuge Visitor's Center, its location at the confluence of the Connecticut River and its major tributary would still make an excellent addition to the Conte Refuge for open space, recreation and wildlife habitat. There is also great potential to develop a network of hiking trails, fishing access sites, and other recreational facilities in this area.

4. *Informal Fishing Access to Chicopee River at Granby Road*

A popular fishing spot is located on the northern bank of the Chicopee River on city-owned land off of Granby Road. There are safety concerns about fishermen crossing the busy Granby Road. The city would like to maintain informal access to this site, and encourage parking only on the river side of Granby Road.

5. *Hiking Trail along the Connecticut River Linking Chicopee to South Hadley*

The City of Chicopee should collaborate with South Hadley, utilities and the state DCR to develop a hiking trail between Chicopee and South Hadley along the Connecticut River. The trail would start at North Chicopee Street and continue up the river to South Hadley Falls. There are remnants of an old road from the last century which has grown over with vegetation, but allows for a foot trail. A portion of the land is owned by Northeast Utilities, but may be available for an easement, and other portions are city-owned. A boat ramp just below the South Hadley border in Chicopee is owned by the Public Access Board and managed by the state Department of Conservation and Recreation. The footpath would connect to this boat ramp area. The Public Access Board may be willing to assist in some trail development on their property. There are potential loop trails from the South Hadley water treatment plant (located in Chicopee) up to the power line corridors and to neighborhoods adjacent to the river.

In South Hadley Falls, the trail would connect to the town center via a ramp/stair and through the South Hadley Falls recreational field across the street from the town hall. The trail could also continue to the South Hadley canal just above the Route 116 bridge. Several

properties along the trail's route would need easements. In the long-term, it may be possible to convert the trail to an extension of the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway.

6. Riverfront Conservation Easements

The City should actively pursue with utilities the potential for donation of lands or easements for unused utility land at two riverfront locations: along the Chicopee River near its confluence with the Connecticut River; and along the Connecticut River near the South Hadley town line. These areas would provide opportunities for river access, passive recreation, and wildlife habitat preservation in the heart of an urban area.

7. Improvements in State Boat Ramps

Improvements should be made to the Medina Street and Syrek Street Boat Ramps, to enhance user facilities and to improve access to the river. Improvements could include picnic facilities, paving access at Syrek Street, sanitary facilities and landscaping.

8. Reductions in Flood Control Dike Height

The City and Army Corps of Engineers should explore flood protection strategies and technology to identify means by which the Connecticut River flood control dike could be reduced in height while maintaining maximum flood protection.

Chicopee Riverfront Recreation Action Plan

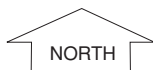
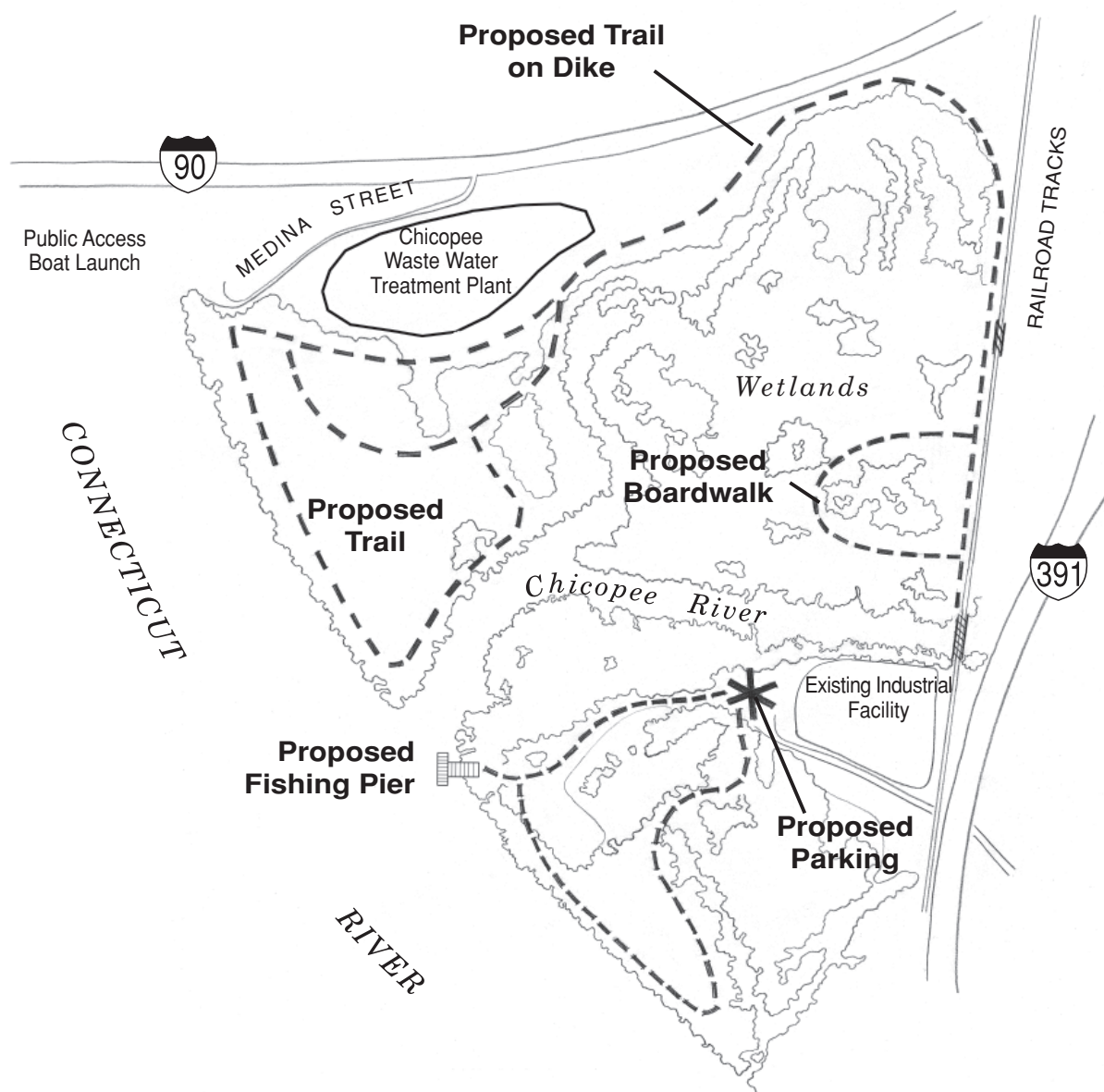
Recommended Action	Key Tasks/Milestone(s)	Participants/Costs/Funding
1) Chicopee Riverwalk and Bikeway: A riverwalk and bikeway should be established from the Connecticut Riverwalk through the city of Chicopee along the Chicopee River to Szot Park and Chicopee Falls. One key parcel on the riverwalk route is privately owned and the city must acquire this parcel in fee or by easement.	a) Secure land or easement from private landowner for the Riverwalk right-of-way. b) Complete 100% engineering and design plans for the Riverwalk. c) Secure all necessary permits from local, state and federal governments. d) Secure funding for construction of the Riverwalk and Bikeway. e) Develop long-term maintenance and security plan.	Participants: City of Chicopee PVPC Chicopee Bikeways Committee Chicopee R. Watershed Council Cost Estimate: \$850,000 for construction phase Funding Sources: ISTEA Enhancements City of Chicopee Urban Self-Help funds
2) Connecticut RiverWalk and Bikeway: The Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway will provide more access to the Connecticut riverfront for residents and visitors. The city should complete engineering plans and secure construction funding to develop the Chicopee segment.	a) Continue negotiations for easements with landowners. b) Complete 100% engineering and design plans for the Riverwalk. c) Secure all necessary permits from local, state and federal governments. d) Secure funding for construction of the Riverwalk and Bikeway. e) Develop long-term maintenance and security plan.	Participants: City of Chicopee PVPC Chicopee Bikeways Committee Cost Estimate: \$2,533,400 for construction phase Funding Sources: ISTEA Enhancements funds Local match funds
3) River Confluence Wildlife Refuge: The city should pursue establishment of a wildlife refuge for the 150-acre area at the Chicopee River confluence with the Connecticut River, possibly as part of the Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge	a) Develop plan for protection and improvements, including hiking trails, fishing access, small boat access and passive recreation facilities. b) Seek funds and formal designation through Conte Refuge.	Participants: City of Chicopee U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Cost estimate: Unavailable Funding Sources: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
4) Maintain Informal Fishing Access to Chicopee River at Granby Road: The Granby Road fishing area located on city-owned property should be maintained as an informal fishing access site.	a) To protect pedestrian safety, encourage parking only on the river side of Granby Road.	Participants: City of Chicopee Cost estimate: No cost

Chicopee Riverfront Recreation Action Plan (continued)

Recommended Action	Key Tasks/Milestone(s)	Participants/Costs/Funding
<p>5) Chicopee/South Hadley Connecticut Riverfront Trail: Chicopee and South Hadley should work together to connect trails from Chicopee to the DCR managed boat ramp at the city-town boundary and north to South Hadley Falls.</p>	<p>a) Conduct a site assessment to determine the potential route and access points and loops. b) Seek to acquire lands or easements for a riverfront trail from Northeast Utilities. c) Develop a conceptual design of route with access points and other elements that are needed. d) Secure funds for construction of trail and amenities.</p>	<p><i>Participants:</i> City of Chicopee Town of South Hadley PVPC Northeast Utilities <i>Cost estimate:</i> Unavailable <i>Funding Sources:</i> Public Access Board Utilities</p>
<p>6) Riverfront Conservation Easements: The city and Chicopee River Watershed Council should pursue the donation of lands or easements for unused utility lands along the Chicopee River and Connecticut River.</p>	<p>a) Meet with utilities to discuss. b) Formalize conservation easements.</p>	<p><i>Participants:</i> Chicopee River Watershed Council City of Chicopee Utilities <i>Cost Estimate:</i> No direct cost</p>
<p>7) Improve State Boat Ramps Improvements should be made to the Medina Street and Syrek Street state boat ramps.</p>	<p>a) Identify and design needed improvements. b) Secure funding for work needed. c) Develop a long-term maintenance plan.</p>	<p><i>Participants:</i> City of Chicopee PVPC MA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation</p>
<p>8) Modify Flood Control Dike System Reduce the height of the Connecticut River flood control dikes to improve river access.</p>	<p>a) Explore flood protection strategies and technology to identify means by which the Connecticut River flood control dike system could be reduced in height while maintaining maximum flood protection.</p>	<p><i>Participants:</i> City of Chicopee PVPC U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</p>

Actions Taken to Date:

- 1) **Development of a Chicopee Riverwalk and Bikeway:**
 - Chicopee Bikeways Advisory Committee established to oversee riverwalk and bikeway development
 - Completion of 25% engineering and design plans for Chicopee Riverwalk.
- 2) **Development of the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway:**
 - Chicopee Bikeways Advisory Committee established to oversee riverwalk and bikeway development
 - Completion of 25% engineering and design plans for Chicopee Riverwalk.
- 3) **River Confluence Wildlife Refuge:**
 - Chicopee proposed that this area become part of the federal Conte Wildlife Refuge.
- 4) **Informal Fishing Access to Chicopee River at Granby Road:**
 - No actions to date.
- 5) **Development of a Chicopee to South Hadley Connecticut Riverfront Hiking Trail:**
 - Planning group established to oversee the development of the joint riverfront trail
 - Site assessments underway
 - Conceptual designs partially complete.
- 6) **Riverfront Conservation Easements**
 - No actions to date.
- 7) **Improve State Boat Ramps**
 - Repairs were made to the Syrek Street boat ramp in 1998.
- 8) **Modify Flood Control Dike System**
 - No actions to date.



Approximate Scale: 1 inch = 650 feet

CHICOPEE RIVER WILDLIFE REFUGE

CHICOPEE, MA

HOLYOKE

RIVERFRONT RECREATION ACTION STRATEGY



View of Connecticut River, Holyoke

Summary of Issues and Opportunities

Holyoke is known as the nation's first planned industrial city, developed along a network of canals that provided water from the Connecticut River to turbines providing hydroelectric power in each of the city's many historic mills. Many historic mills still line the riverfront and canals are prominent in the city. Holyoke's downtown center and several residential areas are located uphill of the mills and industrial areas along the river. Historic mill buildings along the riverfront and canals could be revitalized bringing life back into this part of the city.

Holyoke has several existing riverfront parks or potential recreation areas that could be connected to each other and the downtown, to create more access to the riverfront. This would greatly enhance quality of life in this densely populated city and contribute to riverfront revitalization. Existing parks such as Prospect Park and McNulty Park are underutilized and have been cut off from access to the river and its scenery. Most of the obstacles are overgrown trees and shrubs and awkwardly placed fences or developments. Walkways and viewsheds to the riverfront could be possible by tree trimming and formalizing already used pathways.

Log Pond Cove is an interesting riverfront location, just north of the central city but within walking distance of many city residents. This river cove, marsh, and floodplain forest has been suggested for some level of development for public use and a wildlife sanctuary. This area has been studied several times over the past 30 years in hopes that it could be made more accessible and safe for the public's benefit. The major obstacle to this area is the B&M railroad tracks which lie in-between Log Pond Cove and the potential access sites. If this obstacle were overcome, Log Pond Cove would be a great asset to the community. Another route to Log Pond Cove is the proposed northern extension of the Holyoke Canalwalk and Connecticut Riverwalk, that would link the existing Heritage State Park at the first level canal in the city to other city parks, to Log Pond Cove, and eventually to the Manhan Rail Trail in Easthampton.

An impediment for both the Canalwalk and Log Pond Cove is the ownership of critical parcels or access locations. Holyoke Gas and Electric owns the Log Pond Cove parcel and the canals. B&M railroad still owns and operates the rail line which runs along the riverfront from the canals and past Log Pond Cove. Ownership, access and public use issues

need to be negotiated between the property owners, conservation groups and the city for Holyoke's successful riverfront revitalization.

Recommended Action Strategies

The city of Holyoke has several opportune areas for riverfront revitalization. An important part of the revitalization effort is making connections between the existing open or recreational areas and creating new ways to access and appreciate the Connecticut River.

1. Holyoke Canalwalk

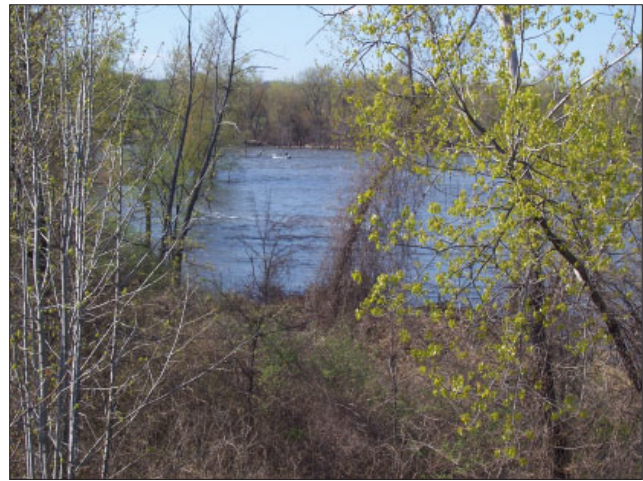
The city of Holyoke hosts an extensive system of canals which have been part of the hydroelectric power producing history of the city. The Holyoke Canalwalk was first envisioned in PVPC's 1995 report, the Connecticut River 2020 Strategy. In 1997, PVPC worked with the City of Holyoke to secure an ISTE grant of \$258,188 to undertake engineering and design plans for the Holyoke Canalwalk. Engineering and design consultants have completed 25% design plans, and several sources of funding for construction have been identified. A Holyoke Canalwalk Committee, comprised of city officials, landowners and businesses, has been meeting over several years to oversee the project development.

The Holyoke Canalwalk is proposed as:

- An integral part of the emerging regional bikeway system in the Pioneer Valley, with linkages to the Connecticut River Walk on the south, and the Manhan Rail Trail on the north;
- An urban promenade and key driver of economic revitalization for downtown Holyoke, featuring decorative paving and railings, historic lighting, canalfront greenspace and landscaping. It will attract both tourism to Holyoke's emerging arts district and new businesses to the canal area.
- An expansion of the already completed Heritage State Park portion of the Canalwalk.

The Holyoke Canalwalk is a pedestrian walkway and promenade along the First and Second Level Canals in downtown Holyoke. It will link City Hall and Holyoke Heritage State Park with many waterfront businesses, artist studios, and other interesting destinations. The Canalwalk will provide:

- Family-oriented opportunities for urban recreation
- A safe route for non-motorized commuting in downtown Holyoke
- Enhanced appreciation for the culture and history of Holyoke
- Economic revitalization through increased tourism downtown



Fishing on Connecticut River, Holyoke

The Holyoke Canalwalk is sited in an area rich in national and historical significance. Built in the late 19th century, the canals diverted waterpower from the Connecticut River and turned Holyoke into the first planned industrial city in the country, earning it the title of Paper City of the World. Today the mill buildings along the canals hold great architectural interest for both historians and casual strollers, and their story is describe in nearby Holyoke Heritage State Park. The Canalwalk will link park visitors with the historic places described in the park visitor center.

The canals are a unique resource for the City of Holyoke, and the Arts and Industry District around the canals. Many of the mills lining the waterways still function as factories, some using the same waterpower on which the city was founded. Others have been adapted as studio space by artists, galleries, craftspeople, and performers, creating destination stops for Canalwalk users. In addition to Heritage Park, attractions adjacent to or nearby the canals include:

- Holyoke Children's Museum
- Holyoke Merry-Go-Round
- Volleyball Hall of Fame



Proposed Canalwalk location, Holyoke

- Holyoke Dam and fish ladder
- Pulaski Park

The Canalwalk will provide pedestrians and bicyclists with a safe connection between all these area features, making Holyoke an ideal place to spend a day exploring, learning, and having fun.

Canalwalk design plans include a 15-to-20-foot wide promenade along the First and Second Level Canals. Decorative paving and landscaping will clean up and enhance the canal banks, the condition of which has deteriorated as a result of long neglect by the previous owners of the Canals. Railings, fences, historically accurate streetlights, and benches will encourage Canalwalk users to linger enjoying the views across the

open canals. Stairs down to the Second Level Canal will let people get closer to the water. An abandoned railway bridge across the Second Canal will be converted to a pedestrian crossing, with shady gazebos providing shelter along the way. Six tall gateways will connect the Canalwalk with other neighborhoods in Holyoke. Public art along the route is also planned to enhance the aesthetics of the area.

Although major portions of the Canalwalk are publicly-owned, parts of the right-of-way are owned by private landowners and by Holyoke Gas and Electric. To implement the project, a easement agreements to secure the right-of-way must be finalized. Holyoke Gas and Electric has committed to support the Holyoke Canalwalk project, through in-kind contributions, and through donation of an easement for the Canalwalk.

Holyoke Canalwalk – Phasing Plan (Revised 1-28-04)

Phase	Description	Estimated Cost	Anticipated Funding Source(s)
Phase One			
<i>Phase 1a</i>	1st Level Canal - Dwight Street to Lyman Street (Auto Shop Side) construction	\$660,000	• Federal Surface Transportation Bond (\$1,200,000)
	Demolition of Auto Shop	\$ 95,000	
<i>Phase 1b</i>	1st Level Canal - Dwight Street to Lyman Street (Lyman Mills Side)	\$622,000	• Federal Surface Transportation Bond (\$1,200,000)
<i>Phase 1c</i>	1st Level Canal – Appleton Street to Dwight Street	\$602,000	• State Environmental Bond (\$700,000)
	Phase 1 Subtotal	\$1,979,000	
Phase Two			
<i>Phase 2a</i>	2nd Level Canal/Race Street – Appleton Street to Dwight Street	\$1,682,000	• Federal Surface Transportation Bond
<i>Phase 2b</i>	Reconstruction of Loading Dock	\$23,000	• Federal Surface Transportation Bond
<i>Phase 2c</i>	Cross Streets – Dwight St. and Lyman St.	\$168,500	• Federal Surface Transportation Bond
<i>Phase 2d</i>	Cross Streets – Dwight St. and Appleton St.	\$168,500	• Federal Surface Transportation Bond
<i>Phase 2e</i>	Overhead Utility Relocation for all of Race Street.	\$2,000,000	• Holyoke Gas and Electric (\$ 2,000,000)
	Phase 2 Subtotal	\$4,042,000	
Phase Three			
<i>Phase 3a</i>	2nd Level Canal/Race Street – Dwight Street to Lyman Street	\$718,000	• Federal Surface Transportation Bond
<i>Phase 3b</i>	2nd Level Canal/Race Street Cabot Street to Appleton Street	\$1,679,000	• Federal Surface Transportation Bond
<i>Phase 3c</i>	2nd Level Canal/Race Street – Hamilton Street to Cabot Street	\$551,000	• Federal Surface Transportation Bond
<i>Phase 3d</i>	Race Street Intersections	\$238,000	• Federal Surface Transportation Bond
	Phase 3 Subtotal	\$3,186,000	
	TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$9,207,000	

Construction work to proceed in the phased order shown.



Jones Ferry River Access Center, Holyoke

2. *Jones Ferry River Access Center*

The City of Holyoke acquired the former Jones Ferry Marina recently for \$365,000 to maintain a public access area for the Connecticut River. The city-owned site, now called the Jones Ferry River Access Center, provides access to the Connecticut River for rowing, canoeing, kayaking and power boating.

3. *Connecticut Riverwalk - Northern Extension*

A feasibility study was completed to examine the potential for extending the Connecticut Riverwalk northward through the length of Holyoke, and linking the Holyoke Canalwalk to the Manhan Rail Trail in Easthampton. This feasibility study established that a feasible route does exist, following the Connecticut River and Route 5 corridor.

4. *Shoreline Access Improvements*

Each spring, the Connecticut River shad derby brings large numbers of fishermen to the Holyoke Dam area. However, access to the Connecticut River shoreline in Holyoke is limited by flood control walls, older mill buildings and private property. Fishermen are seeking increased shoreline access in Holyoke, particularly in the area downstream of Holyoke Dam, and south of Slim Shad Point. As part of the FERC dam re-licensing agreement, Holyoke Gas and Electric is developing Slim Shad Point, a fishing access area near the Robert E. Barrett Fishway.



Jones Ferry River Access Center, Holyoke

There also may be potential to create a Connecticut Riverfront Walkway on land formerly occupied by a railroad track serving industries along the First Level Canal. This land has excellent river views, with potential for fishing access, picnic areas and hiking/running trail. This walkway could serve the riverfront industries and businesses, by providing recreational opportunities for employees, scenic views and outdoor lunch areas.



Proposed Shoreline Access Site, Holyoke



Holyoke Dike, Potential Shoreline Walkway or Access area



Potential route for Connecticut Riverwalk Extension, Holyoke

5. *Log Pond Cove Wildlife Sanctuary*

An area with great potential for an urban wildlife sanctuary is Log Pond Cove. This is a 41-acre area along the western bank of the Connecticut River just north of Holyoke's center. The land area is owned by Holyoke Gas and Electric. The cove has distinct environments, including a wetlands area adjacent to a shallow lagoon, which is slowly filling in with vegetation, and a large forest and meadow floodplain area. Log Pond Cove can be easily seen by passersby over the Muller Bridge (Route 202), from Jones Point Park, or from Hampden Street. It is currently used informally by residents in the area for swimming, camping, nature viewing, walking, motor-biking, and other activities. Many are worried about safety considerations and the impact current use has on some sensitive wildlife species in the cove.

Several plans have been created for Log Pond Cove since the 1960s. These plans have ranged from passive nature paths in a wildlife sanctuary setting to a full-scale youth camp. Components to plans have included a nature walk along a boardwalk through the "marsh-like" area in the cove, a bridge over the B&M railroad tracks which separate the cove from potential access points, picnic structures, a pavilion, a bandshell, athletic fields, and sanitary facilities. The consensus over the years seems to be that Log Pond Cove is a valued community resource and would be even more of an asset to the community, and the region, if it could be made safe and accessible to the public, and if some public facilities were added.

An ad hoc group came together in the first part of 1995 to try to determine the best elements of plans for the site, and ways in which to fund the different elements. Immediately, there were two issues that were of major concern — future ownership and the expense which would be borne by creating access over the railroad tracks — which has discontinued other plans in the past. Aside from those issues, many participants recommended a passive recreation/ conservation easement plan. This plan would include use of existing paths throughout most of the area, and installation of interpretive signs at the entrances of the area showing trail routes and some of the natural and historic features one may observe within.

HG&E owns in fee the Log Pond Cove parcel, and has initiated the placement of a conservation restriction. The CR proposed will be conveyed to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation at no cost to the agency.. Along with the donation of the CR, several amenities should be added including an access bridge over the railroad tracks, entrance signage, gates, and trail markers for existing trails.



Holyoke Fishway, with potential museum or aquarium site



Potential Riverfront Park Site, south Holyoke

6. *Holyoke Fishway Area*

The Robert E. Barrett Fishway at Hadley Station near the Holyoke Dam is already a great tourist destination, attracting over 10,000 visitors per year in only two months (May and June) that it is open. Holyoke Gas & Electric, which recently acquired this facility, is planning to expand it to include a picnic area and outdoor pavilion, signage, viewing areas, parking, walkways and access roads. There is excellent potential in this area to develop additional attractions, and to link the Fishway to the nearby proposed Holyoke Canalwalk. A walkway could be developed along a route paralleling Gatehouse Road.

HG&E has demolished a structure in the Fishway area, and is completing a project for removal of historic coal tar contamination at the site. There is potential to develop a

museum or aquarium at this site. The area already attracts visitors to the Fishway and Holyoke Heritage State Park. A new museum/aquarium, combined with the development of the Holyoke Canalwalk, would make the area a significant tourist destination.

7. *Holyoke Riverfront Park and Connecticut Riverwalk Link*

Holyoke has an opportunity to create a riverfront park that would allow access to the river and provide open areas for recreation. There is an open field across from Providence Hospital between the western bank of the Connecticut River and Route 5 in the southern section of Holyoke that has great potential for a riverfront park. The park could include several playing fields, a small boat access to the river, and a parking area. The parcel of land is owned by the Sisters of Providence.

As a part of the implementation plan, it is recommended that the city of Holyoke continue to negotiate with the Sisters of Providence to arrange for a donation or bargain sale of the land, or lease of the land, for the purposes of a needed city park. Alternatively, the Sisters of Providence could make a conservation gift of the land to a qualified land trust or governmental agency. A conservation gift is a donation of land, with a conservation restriction

to ensure no development occurs in future.

There is also potential to link this area with the Connecticut Riverwalk being developed in West Springfield. A bikeway/walkway could extend from the Connecticut Riverwalk in the Hayes/Bacon Avenue area, northward through riverfront open space under the Mass Turnpike, through the Sister of Providence riverfront parcel, then

continuing northward along Main Street to Springdale Park.

8. *Other Holyoke Riverfront Projects*

Other projects which the city should pursue include: Springdale Park river access area on the Connecticut River; improvements to promote increased tourism at the Holyoke Fish Passageway; and development of a Dinosaur Track Hiking Trail, as described below.

Holyoke Riverfront Recreation Action Plan

Recommended Action	Key Tasks/Milestone(s)	Participants/Costs/Funding
1) Holyoke Canalwalk: The canals in Holyoke present a great opportunity for an attraction, for urban revitalization, as well as a connection between significant areas within Holyoke. The Holyoke Canalwalk should be developed along the First and Second Level Canals leading to other attractions within Holyoke such as Heritage State Park.	In order to move the Holyoke Canalwalk project forward, the following key problems and issues must be addressed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure MHD support for the project. • Continue to pursue Canalwalk construction funding. Seek approval of a contract for state funds from the Environmental Bond. Continue to work with Congressman Olver to secure additional federal appropriations for next phases of construction. • Secure private easements for the Canalwalk right-of-way. • Secure Holyoke Gas and Electric commitment for in-kind contributions to relocate overhead utilities on Race Street. • Complete design and engineering plans. This is contingent upon MHD approval of 25% design plans and holding a public hearing. 	<i>Participants:</i> PVPC City of Holyoke Utilities Property owners and businesses Private sponsors DCR Heritage Park <i>Cost estimate:</i> \$9,207,000 (see Phasing Plan for details) <i>Funding sources:</i> ISTEA Enhancement program Federal budget City of Holyoke Holyoke Gas & Electric Private sponsors
2) Jones Ferry River Access Center: The city purchased the Jones Ferry property in order to maintain public river access. It provides access for rowing, canoeing, kayaking, and power boaters. Holyoke Rows and Holyoke Sailing now operate out of Jones Ferry.	a) Renovate or replace existing building for boat storage, office space, kitchen, community meetings, summer camp and recreational classes. b) Make repairs to existing boat ramp. c) Provide handicapped access to dock area. d) Improve existing docks to accommodate sailing program. Receive donation of docks, potentially from a marina in Connecticut. Local volunteers to complete engineering and installation of docks, materials to be funded by Holyoke Rows.	<i>Participants:</i> City of Holyoke Public Access Board Urban Self-help grant Holyoke Rows Holyoke Sailing <i>Cost estimate:</i> n.a. <i>Funding sources:</i> City of Holyoke Urban Self-help Community Development Block Grant

Holyoke Riverfront Recreation Action Plan (continued)

Recommended Action	Key Tasks/Milestone(s)	Participants/Costs/Funding
<p>3) Connecticut RiverWalk northern extension:</p> <p>There is potential to link the Holyoke Canalwalk to the riverfront, to the Hadley Station fish passage area, to Pulaski Park, and north along the Connecticut River to Easthampton. This would create a northern extension of the Connecticut Riverwalk, linking Holyoke to the Manhan Rail Trail.</p>	<p>a) Develop design and engineering plans for the trail extension.</p> <p>b) Secure easement agreements from landowners</p> <p>c) Secure funds for construction</p>	<p><i>Participants:</i> PVPC City of Holyoke Railroad</p> <p><i>Cost estimate:</i> n.a.</p> <p><i>Funding sources:</i> City of Holyoke ISTEA Urban Self-help</p>
<p>4) Improve Shoreline Fishing Access:</p> <p>Sportsmen come to Holyoke in large numbers each year for the annual shad derby, but have limited access to shoreline areas. In particular, access is desired south of the Holyoke Dam and below Slim Shad Point, where flood control walls limit access now.</p>	<p>a) Construct a handicapped accessible fishing platform at Slim Shad Point, and add ADA parking, remove debris and grade trail from road to platform.</p> <p>b) Secure access agreements for shoreline areas south of Slim Shad Point</p> <p>c) Make physical improvements to provide access for fishing, including passage over floodwalls.</p> <p>d) Investigate potential for creating a Connecticut Riverfront Walkway along the river near the First Level Canal. There is potential for fishing access, picnic areas, and hiking/running trails.</p>	<p><i>Participants:</i> City of Holyoke Holyoke Gas and Electric Hampden County Sportsmen's Council New England Shad Association</p> <p><i>Cost estimate:</i> \$30,000 for Slim Shad Point access</p> <p><i>Funding sources:</i> Public Access Board Holyoke Gas and Electric Hampden County Sportsmen's Council New England Shad Association</p>
<p>5) Log Pond Cove Wildlife Area:</p> <p>The Log Pond Cove wildlife area should be protected by a conservation restriction with some allowance for light public access and passive recreation opportunities. The property is currently used by the public as a conservation area with passive recreation. This conservation restriction would make the current uses permanent and would prevent development of the site in the future.</p>	<p>a) Develop strong local support for creating a Log Pond Cove Wildlife Area by establishing a broad-based local planning group to oversee future actions</p> <p>b) HGE has initiated work to donate a conservation restriction to DCR, allowing passive recreation in the deed.</p> <p>c) Work with the railroad to develop safe public access points to Log Pond Cove including an access over the B&M railroad tracks</p> <p>d) Install entrance kiosk, noting importance of site for historic logging drives, and install trail markers</p>	<p><i>Participants:</i> Holyoke Gas and Electric Holyoke Conservation Comm. MA Dept.of Cons. and Recreation B&M Railroad PVPC Greater Holyoke Youth Camping US Fish and Wildlife Service MA Department of Fish and Game Non-Profit Conservation Groups</p> <p><i>Cost estimate:</i> Unavailable</p> <p><i>Funding sources:</i> In-kind volunteer support MA DCR City of Holyoke Holyoke Gas and Electric</p>

Holyoke Riverfront Recreation Action Plan (continued)

Recommended Action	Key Tasks/Milestone(s)	Participants/Costs/Funding
<p>6) Holyoke Fishway Area: HG&E is expanding the Robert E. Barrett Fishway at Hadley Station, to include a picnic area and year-round display. HG&E is developing Slimshad Point. There is potential to make this area more attractive for tourism and recreation. The former Gas Works building could be demolished to make way for a river aquarium or museum. However, contamination of the Gas Works property is a significant issue to overcome, and may preclude outdoor uses on the site.</p>	<p>a) Investigate potential for expanded fish passageway facilities to attract tourism, similar to Washington's Bonneville Dam facility.</p> <p>b) Investigate potential to develop a river aquarium or museum at the former Gas Works building. Possible themes for this museum could include: a freshwater fish aquarium; an environmental resource center for the Conte Refuge; a historic museum showcasing the city's industrial development based on the river's energy and power.</p> <p>c) Seek an EPA Brownfields grant to complete a site assessment on the Gas Works property.</p> <p>d) Investigate potential for a pedestrian walkway to link the Fishway to the Canalwalk.</p>	<p><i>Participants:</i> Holyoke Gas and Electric City of Holyoke</p> <p><i>Cost estimate:</i> Unavailable</p> <p><i>Funding sources:</i> Holyoke Gas and Electric</p>
<p>7) Dinosaur Track Hiking Trail</p>	<p>a) Explore the potential for a hiking trail linking the dinosaur tracks public access area along Route 5 to Ferry Street</p> <p>b) Work with B&M Railroad to secure a river access agreement.</p>	<p><i>Participants:</i> The Trustees of Reservations City of Holyoke MassHighway Holyoke Gas & Electric PVPC</p> <p><i>Cost Estimate:</i> n.a.</p> <p><i>Funding sources:</i> DCR Recreational Trails Act grant In-kind services from B&M RR ISTEA Enhancement funds</p>
<p>8) Holyoke Riverfront Park and Connecticut Riverwalk Link: Holyoke should continue to work with the Sisters of Providence to develop the riverfront property in front of Providence Hospital into a city park with small boat access. There is also potential to extend the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway in West Springfield northward, linking to this parcel and Springdale Park.</p>	<p>a) Secure an Easement or Acquisition of the Property</p> <p>b) Develop a Conceptual Design of the Site</p> <p>c) Secure Design/Engineering Plans of the Site</p> <p>d) Secure Construction of the Project</p> <p>e) Develop Maintenance and Use Plan</p>	<p><i>Participants:</i> City of Holyoke Sisters of Providence PVPC</p> <p><i>Cost estimate:</i> Unavailable</p> <p><i>Funding sources:</i> City of Holyoke Sisters of Providence Urban Self-Help</p>
<p>9) Springdale Park Access Area and Bike Route: Create a bikeway/walkway, looping through Springdale Park, and linking south along Main Street to the Sister of Providence parcel (noted above) and connecting to the Connecticut Riverwalk in West Springfield.</p>	<p>a) Investigate potential for connections from the park to the riverfront, such as a walkway along flood control dikes</p> <p>b) Explore opportunities to link a bike route with dedicated lanes along Main Street to Springdale Park</p>	<p><i>Participants:</i> City of Holyoke US Army Corps of Engineers</p> <p><i>Cost estimate:</i> Unavailable</p> <p><i>Funding sources:</i> Urban Self-help grant</p>

Actions Taken to Date:

1) Development of Holyoke Canalwalk:

- PVPC and the City of Holyoke secured an ISTEA Transportation Enhancement grant to complete engineering and design plans for the Canalwalk.
- 25% engineering and design plans have been completed.
- The Holyoke Canalwalk Committee has been established to oversee development of plans for the Holyoke Canalwalk.
- Over \$1.2 million in federal funds have been secured for construction of the first segment of the Canalwalk. Additional federal funds are being sought for completing construction.

2) Jones Ferry River Access Center:

- The City of Holyoke acquired the former Jones Ferry Marina for public river access.
- The non-profit group, Holyoke Rows, now operates out of Jones Ferry, and has acquired kayaks, canoes and a sailboat.
- Holyoke Rows and the Holyoke Boys and Girls Club have developed a community boating program, boating classes and a rowing team at the Access Center.
- The city has started holding recreational events, including a family fishing day, kayak race, and fishing tournament.
- Holyoke Sailing, in affiliation with Holyoke Rows, provides sailing opportunities for youth and adult volunteers, owns one sailboat and uses several others on loan.

3) Connecticut RiverWalk northern extension:

- A feasibility study has been completed, identifying a proposed route alignment for the Connecticut Riverwalk, linking the Holyoke Canalwalk northward along the Connecticut River and Route 5 to the Manhan Rail Trail.

4) Improve Shoreline Fishing Access:

- Improvements have been designed for handicapped access to Slimshad Point.

5) Creation of a Log Pond Cove Wildlife Area:

- Removal of water chestnuts, an invasive aquatic species, has been coordinated by the Holyoke Conservation Commission, with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and HG&E.
- An ad hoc planning group was established in Holyoke to recommend plans and oversee future actions at Log Pond Cove Wildlife area.
- Discussions have been initiated with the group and property owner Holyoke Gas and Electric regarding HG&E's plans for the area.

6) Holyoke Fishway Area

- HG&E has begun to develop plans for a picnic area and outdoor pavilion.

7) Dinosaur Track Hiking Trail

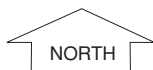
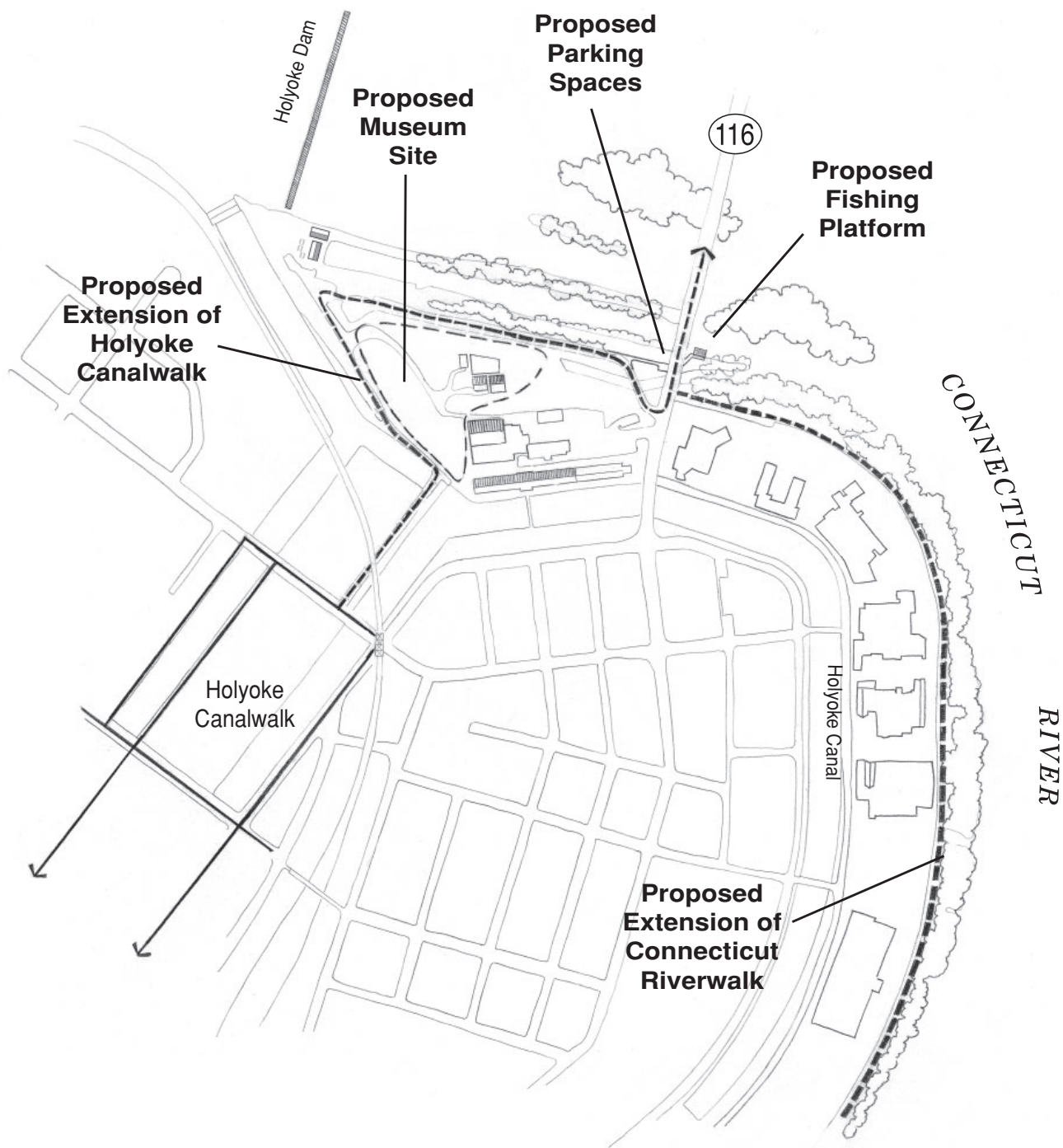
- The Trustees of Reservations have acquired the land which includes the major concentration of dinosaur tracks along the Connecticut River in Holyoke.

8) Development of a Holyoke Riverfront Park:

- Discussions were initiated between the city of Holyoke and the Sisters of Providence regarding the riverfront parcel in front of Providence Hospital.

9) Springdale Park Access Area

- A study of a bike lane route was completed in 2004 by University of Massachusetts students, as part of the "Pioneer of the Valley" study for Holyoke.



Approximate Scale: 1 inch = 650 feet

SLIM SHAD POINT HOLYOKE, MA

LONGMEADOW

RIVERFRONT RECREATION ACTION STRATEGY



Riverfront Land, Longmeadow

Summary of Issues and Opportunities

Longmeadow was first settled as a farming community in the Meadows along the Connecticut River in 1645. The great flood of 1695 drove families to the uplands on which the majority of town is now located. Longmeadow has changed from a farming community, originally located in the Meadows, to a residential suburb with its population almost completely located in the uplands.

Longmeadow's waterfront features nearly 1,700 acres of Connecticut River flood plain in the Meadows, an area comprised of prime agricultural land, the Fannie Stebbins Memorial Wildlife Refuge, lands held by the Conservation

Commission, a small number of privately owned year round residences, and several privately owned undeveloped parcels. All of the town's 23 percent of agriculturally zoned land is located west of Interstate 91 within the 100-year flood plain (Longmeadow Community Development Plan, 2004). Single-family residential development is permitted under agricultural zoning. Longmeadow's floodplain is host to several threatened or endangered species of plants identified by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

The Fannie Stebbins Memorial Wildlife Refuge consists of approximately 338 acres of prime riverine forest, wet meadows, wetlands, and brooks with a number of walking

trails. The Refuge is privately owned by the Allen Bird Club of Springfield, Massachusetts and is listed by the National Park Service, along with other town-owned land in the Meadows, as the 152nd site to be included in the Registry of National Landmarks. This listing designates the land as a nationally significant natural area, meaning it must be one of the best examples of a biotic community or geologic feature in its physiographic province, such as terrestrial or aquatic ecosystems. It is open to the public for hiking, snowshoeing, cross-county-skiing, and wildlife observation, as well as educational programs.

Four major brooks generally traverse Longmeadow from east to west, down to the Connecticut River including Wheelmeadow Brook, Raspberry Brook, Cooley Brook, and Longmeadow Brook.

The Longmeadow Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) believes that lands currently used for conservation or recreation should remain open space and efforts be made to inform the citizens of Longmeadow about these resources (Longmeadow Community Development Plan, 2004).

Recommended Action Strategies

The following recommendations were derived from public comment solicited during the development of this plan and are consistent with Longmeadow's Community Development Plan.

1. Fannie Stebbins Memorial Wildlife Refuge

Long-term protection of the Fannie Stebbins Memorial Wildlife Refuge from residential development is greatly needed. Effective land use controls include the establishment of conservation restrictions or other types of deeded land use restrictions. Zoning changes could also help protect the land from future development. Portions of the refuge are currently zoned agricultural, but higher protection could be achieved through implementation of overlay districts designed with performance standards for open space protection.

2. The Meadows (Riverfront)

The Town should support the Conservation Commission's ongoing efforts to acquire riverfront property to preserve open space, to protect wetland function, to protect flood plain storage, and to provide for passive recreation for the town. The Conservation Commission should work closely with the Park and Recreation Department for developing passive recreational activities on environmentally sensitive land in the Meadows, including a trail system and educational stations. The Town should continue to support the development and maintenance of farming activities, and



Riverfront Land, Longmeadow

the development of a forestry management program on properties in the Meadows in conjunction with state and federal programs.

In addition to promoting land acquisition for open space and recreation, the Town should consider zoning options for land protection such as Transfer of Development and Creative Development Bylaws.

3. Town Owned Riverfront Property

The Conservation Commission has been working with riverfront landowners to acquire land along the river, particularly 200/216 Anthony Road, for conservation and passive recreational use. The Town should continue to support this work and the development of a contiguous Longmeadow Riverfront Park for passive recreation, including public recreation and parkland with picnic tables, playgrounds, and parking areas. Such a park would expand local opportunities for public access to the river, specifically limited to non-motorized water crafts. The Town also seeks continued cooperation and coordination between the town and riverfront residents and private businesses such as the Pioneer Valley Yacht Club, for promotion of ongoing public amenities on the riverfront.

Longmeadow Riverfront Recreation Action Plan

Recommended Action	Key Tasks/Milestone(s)	Participants/Costs/Funding
1) Long-term Protection of Fannie Stebbins Memorial Wildlife Refuge	a) Establish deeded conservation restrictions at the Refuge. b) Implement a Creative Development Bylaw and Overlay District with performance standards for open space protection.	<i>Participants:</i> Allen Bird Club, Longmeadow Conservation Commission <i>Cost estimate:</i> Unavailable <i>Funding Sources:</i> Public Access Board Urban Self-Help grant Private contributions
2) Protection of The Meadows Support ongoing efforts to acquire riverfront property to preserve open space, to protect wetland function, to protect flood plain storage, and to provide passive recreation opportunities for the town.	a) Design and engineering for a trail system and educational stations b) Promote landowner participation in programs to encourage farming such as Chapter61a and APR. c) Develop a forestry management program for properties in the Meadows in conjunction with state and federal programs. d) Evaluate zoning options for land protection such as Transfer of Development and Creative Development Bylaws.	<i>Participants:</i> Longmeadow Conservation Commission Longmeadow Park and Recreation Department <i>Cost estimate:</i> Unavailable <i>Funding Sources:</i> Public Access Board Urban Self-Help grant Private contributions
3) Creation of a Longmeadow Riverfront Park Develop a contiguous Longmeadow Riverfront Park for passive recreation, including public recreation and parkland with picnic tables, playgrounds, and parking areas on Town-owned land.	a) Prepare design and engineering plans for park development. b) Implement plans.	<i>Participants:</i> Longmeadow Conservation Commission Longmeadow Park and Recreation Department <i>Cost estimate:</i> Unavailable <i>Funding Sources:</i> Public Access Board Urban Self-Help grant Private contributions

Actions Taken to Date:

- 1) **Long-term Protection of Fannie Stebbins Memorial Wildlife Refuge:**
No action to date.
- 2) **Protection of The Meadows:**
No action to date.
- 3) **Creation of a Longmeadow Riverfront Park:**
No action to date.

SOUTH HADLEY

RIVERFRONT RECREATION ACTION STRATEGY



View of Holyoke Dam and Connecticut River from South Hadley

Summary of Issues and Opportunities

South Hadley is a town with two villages of distinctly different character. South Hadley Falls has an industrial heritage which was made possible by the proximity of the historic South Hadley canal and the Holyoke Dam. Mount Holyoke College has been a strong influence in South Hadley Center, a classic New England college town with shops and homes.

Along the northern riverfront, there is a great deal of open land and less commercial or industrial development. Few vistas of the river remain along the northern end except from the new Bachelor Brook & Stony Brook Resource Area off Ferry Street and the adjacent Brunelle's Marina. Below Ferry Street the riverfront is steep, wooded, and has a good deal of residential development that blocks access and views. In South Hadley Falls there is compact industrial-style development up to the river's edge. South Hadley Falls still has some old mills, including the Texon Mill, which is a prominent landmark directly on the riverfront.

The South Hadley Falls Bicentennial Canal Park is a lovely area off Canal Street. It has a riverside trail, and a wonderful viewing area available for picnicking.

The Conservation Commission owns some 39 acres of undeveloped riverfront land along River Road, adjacent to the town's Ledges Golf Course (purchased with Urban Self-Help funds). This creates a large block of relatively undeveloped land, that is used for recreation (mostly golf, but also used in the winter by residents for skiing, snowshoeing, and nature observation). The banks are too steep in here for river access.

The Conservation Commission also owns two other properties along the Connecticut River further north of the Ledges, but below the Bachelor & Stony Brook Area. They are the Bagg-Pierce Wildlife Sanctuary and the Popp Property (purchased last year with the help of Valley Land Fund). They are undeveloped wooded conservation areas along the river, used for hiking and nature observation. The banks are too steep for good river access.

Major issues confronting South Hadley include protection of the remaining undeveloped riverfront lands in town, as well as reinvigorating the village in South Hadley Falls. South Hadley has a lot of river frontage not apparent to passersby. Public access to the riverfront and the many potential trails and historic amenities along the riverfront should be enhanced and made more accessible and visible. These local attributes will benefit the community in both scenic and natural aspects, and are likely to improve the local economy and quality of life.

Recommended Action Strategies

South Hadley's riverfront could be a great asset to the town, providing a focus for economic development and recreation in South Hadley Falls and an attractive area of open space and wildlife habitat in the northern part of town. In the southern part of town, where the Connecticut River flows past the historic South Hadley canal and over the Holyoke Dam, there are many possible enhancements that could be made to link the village of South Hadley Falls to the river, and also to stimulate interest in the village for increased economic development, as described below. There are several sections of the South Hadley Falls riverfront which, with cleaning up and improvements, could be turned into pleasant trails and recreation areas. These riverfront areas could be connected to interesting attractions such as the historic South Hadley Falls Bicentennial Canal Park, the Beechgrounds Park across from town hall and the South Hadley Falls shops and businesses.

1. South Hadley Falls Riverfront and Trail

The South Hadley Falls riverfront has great potential for walking and mountain biking trails, as well connections to an existing small state boat ramp. Long-time South Hadley residents know the Connecticut Riverfront area in South Hadley Falls, south of the Route 116 Bridge as "the Beechgrounds" due to its sandy beachlike qualities.



Location for South Hadley Riverfront Trail

This area has been the subject of several previous town projects/studies, including the 1997 DEM Greenways and Trail grant for the South Hadley Riverfront Trail in "the Beechgrounds". The Beechgrounds Park is presently a park with heavily used athletic fields. The riverfront area could be improved for better, safer public access, fishing, picnicking, and hiking, including the following elements:

- a) Development of riverfront picnic area and fishing pier;
- b) Establishment of an annual river clean up day. The Beechgrounds area does have park maintenance, and has also had several Earth Day and CT River cleanups in recent years.
- c) Improvements to signage for both the park and proposed trail system; and,
- d) Creation of an improved trail system, with appropriate landscaping and trash barrels.

Engineering plans were developed in 1997 for a handicapped accessible trail extending along the Connecticut River in South Hadley Falls from the playing fields and up Buttery Brook to Bridge Street. However, some of this area is private property, and the South Hadley Falls Riverfront Trail has not been constructed to date.

In the longer term, this trail system could be extended:

- south to Chicopee, linking with the Connecticut River Walk and Bikeway;
- north along the Connecticut River on Holyoke Gas and Electric property to the Mount Holyoke Range.
- along Bachelor and Stony Brooks and along the Dry Brook Trail.

For the short-term, segments could be worked on as possible funding from a variety of sources is secured. There are several possible funding sources including the Urban Self-Help, Self-Help programs or the DCR Recreational Trails Program.

2. Canal Gatehouse Park, South Hadley Canal and former Texon Mill Buildings

The Texon Mill building is slated for demolition, and the building's site will be developed to connect Canal Gatehouse Park and Riverside Park with a park and trail through the Texon property. As part of the Holyoke Dam re-licensing, Holyoke Gas and Electric will demolish the Texon Mill and build the Canal Gatehouse Park, at a cost of \$30,000. The park will focus on the historical significance of the Texon Mill and historic canal site both a transportation corridor and source of hydropower. Major components of the park include development of walkways, viewing platforms and interpretive signs and excavation of portions of the historic canal. Texon Mill was the site of the first continuous roll papermaking in the United States. The South Hadley Canal, in operation

from 1795 to 1862, was the site of the first inclined plane and first improved navigable waterway in the United States, and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The upper level of Riverside Park (the Texon Mill site) will make use of the mill equipment. Canal Gatehouse Park could be linked thematically or physically with the Holyoke Canalwalk and Hadley Station Fishway on the opposite side of the Connecticut River and the South Hadley Falls Bicentennial Canal Park just upriver on the same side.

The demolition will open up river views for several structures associated with the Texon Mill, which should be revitalized. They will have a vantage point like no other on the Connecticut River for views up and down the river. Holyoke Water Power Company (HWP) still owns these buildings, such as the “filter building”. HWP could sell or lease them to appropriate owners or tenants for renewal or demolition. The town or a private developer should improve the structures and work to fill them with uses such as restaurants, shops, offices and possibly a museum showcasing the old machinery and workings of an old mill. This property would also integrate with the South Hadley to Chicopee Connecticut Riverfront Trail described above.

3. *South Hadley Riverside Park*

As part of the Holyoke Dam re-licensing project, Holyoke Gas and Electric will construct South Hadley Riverside Park west of the Route 116 bridge in South Hadley Falls. The Riverside Park will consist of trails on two levels with several viewing points, interpretive signage about the historic canal, benches, picnic areas and clearing for shoreline fishing access.

4. *The Bachelor Brook and Stony Brook Resource Area*

The Town of South Hadley has recently purchased 284 acres of land along Stony Brook and Bachelor Brook, near their confluences with the Connecticut River for conservation and recreation purposes from Northeast Utilities. The land is located on both sides of Ferry Street, and is bounded by Hadley Street and the Connecticut River. It is one of the few large pieces of open land left in South Hadley along the river, and includes 3000 linear feet of Connecticut River frontage. The land will be kept available for agriculture, hiking, cross-country skiing and passive recreation.

The total purchase price was \$1,550,000, which included funding of \$500,000 from a Self-Help Grant from Commonwealth of MA Division of Conservation Services, \$300,000 from Mount Holyoke College, \$89,000 from the town conservation land fund, and other town financing.



Trail along Connecticut River, South Hadley



Texon Mill, South Hadley



State Boat Access Ramp, South Hadley

South Hadley Riverfront Recreation Action Plan

Recommended Action	Key Tasks/Milestone(s)	Participants/Costs/Funding
<p>1) South Hadley Falls Riverfront and Trail:</p> <p>To increase public access and appreciation of the Connecticut riverfront, efforts should be made to create a walking trail along the riverfront in South Hadley Falls, extending to Chicopee, and north to the HG&E Gatehouse, and South Hadley Falls Bicentennial Canal Park.</p> <p>Improvements to “the Beechgrounds” area and other potential attractions would increase safety and bring people back to the riverfront.</p>	<p>a) Develop a conceptual plan for a trail to tie Riverside Park from the HG&E gatehouse, and South Hadley Falls Bicentennial Canal Park south to “the Beechgrounds” area and then connecting to the Main Street state boat ramp.</p> <p>b) Conduct a site assessment and assess needs for enhancements at “the Beechgrounds” area.</p> <p>c) Determine possible access sites, foot bridges, and locations for kiosks or signs.</p> <p>d) Secure funding for design and engineering plans.</p> <p>e) Secure funding for construction.</p> <p>f) Develop a long-term maintenance plan and budget for the trail.</p>	<p><i>Participants:</i> Holyoke Gas and Electric City of Chicopee Town of South Hadley PVPC</p> <p><i>Cost estimate:</i> Unavailable</p> <p><i>Funding Sources:</i> Holyoke Gas and Electric Town of South Hadley Public Access Board Urban Self-Help grant</p>
<p>2) Canal Gatehouse Park, Texon Mill and Associated Structures</p> <p>This park will be located at the site of two historic gatehouses on the river’s east bank near the Holyoke Dam.</p>	<p>a) Demolish Texon Mill building. (scheduled for 2005)</p> <p>b) Construct Canal Gatehouse Park, Phase One, including walking trails.</p> <p>c) Seek additional funds for additional improvements to and expansion of Canal Gatehouse Park. Create a park to commemorate the Texon Mill and South Hadley Canal, using old equipment from the mill to set up a discovery park with sculptural art.</p> <p>d) Investigate revitalization opportunities for other HWP-owned structures on the Texon site, such as the “filter building”, which could be redeveloped for shops or restaurants.</p>	<p><i>Participants:</i> Holyoke Gas and Electric South Hadley</p> <p><i>Cost estimate:</i> \$30,000 (for Phase One of Canal Gatehouse Park)</p> <p><i>Funding Sources:</i> Holyoke Gas and Electric</p>
<p>3) South Hadley Riverside Park</p> <p>This park will be developed on two levels in the area south of the Texon site and north of the Route 116 bridge.</p>	<p>a) Develop a Riverside Park on land adjacent to the Route 116 bridge in South Hadley Falls, in cooperation with Holyoke Gas and Electric.</p> <p>b) The upper level of the park will focus on the historical significance of the river on the development of the area, and will include a gazebo/pavilion.</p> <p>c) Develop the lower level of Riverside Park with picnic facilities and walking trails from the Route 116 bridge in South Hadley north to the Texon site.</p> <p>d) Develop a long-term maintenance plan and budget for the park.</p>	<p><i>Participants:</i> Holyoke Gas and Electric Town of South Hadley South Hadley Canal Committee</p> <p><i>Cost estimate:</i> \$150,000</p> <p><i>Funding Sources:</i> Holyoke Gas and Electric</p>

Actions Taken to Date:

1) South Hadley Falls Riverfront and Trail:

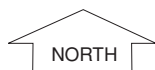
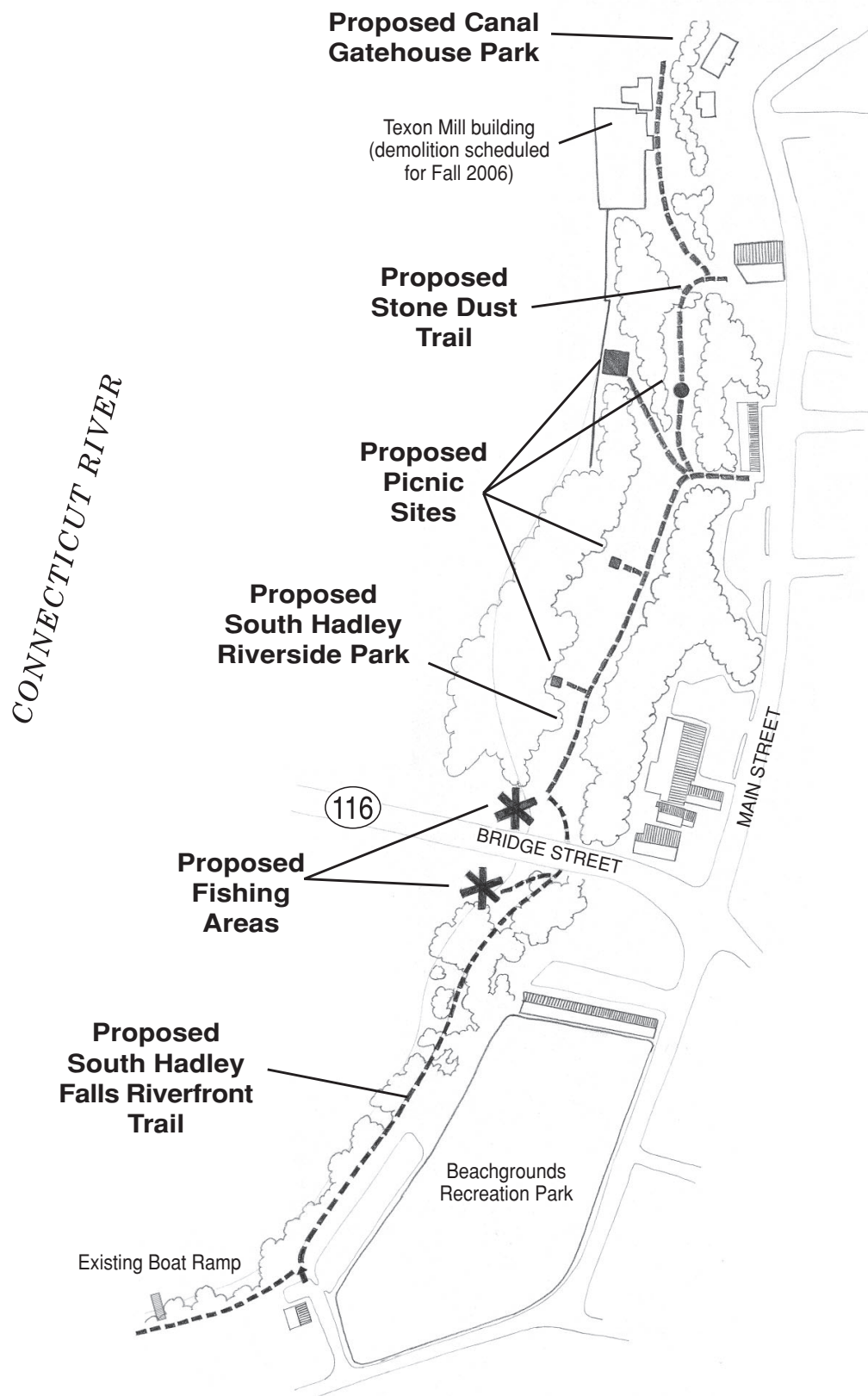
- Design plans for a wheelchair accessible trail along the riverfront, linking the Falls business district, the Beechgrounds, the South Hadley Canal and the state boat ramp, were prepared by Almer Huntley Associates in 1997.

2) Canal Gatehouse Park:

- Holyoke Gas and Electric has prepared design plans for Gatehouse Park as part of the Connecticut River Recreation Management Plan required as part of the FERC relicensing process for the Holyoke Dam.

3) South Hadley Riverside Park:

- Holyoke Gas and Electric has prepared design plans for Riverside Park as part of the Comprehensive Recreation and Land Management Plan required as part of the FERC relicensing process for the Holyoke Dam.



Approximate Scale: 1 inch = 650 feet

SOUTH HADLEY FALLS

SOUTH HADLEY, MA

SPRINGFIELD

RIVERFRONT RECREATION ACTION STRATEGY



Benches at Riverfront, Connecticut Riverwalk, Springfield

Summary of Issues and Opportunities

Springfield is the largest Massachusetts city along the Connecticut River. The river played a key role in Springfield's historical development, and as former Mayor and now Congressman Richard Neal has stated, "Springfield's future is intimately tied to the Connecticut River." The City of Springfield, through numerous city-wide planning efforts, has continually stated its commitment to the redevelopment of the Connecticut Riverfront area.

Over the past fifty years, Springfield has been gradually cut off from its riverfront by the unfortunate siting and construction of railroad tracks and Interstate 91 along the riverfront. Flood control walls and dikes further alienate the community from the river. This severing of the riverfront from the rest of the city cut off formerly vibrant neighborhoods, eroding the residential core and creating blighted open space. The construction of auto dealerships and gas stations along Columbus Avenue further obstructed the city's riverfront accessibility.

Today, the riverfront spans five distinct neighborhoods (Forest Park, South End, Downtown, North End and Brightwood respectively from south to north) and four zoning districts (Business B, West Columbus Avenue Urban Renewal District, Industrial A, and Riverfront). City-adopted plans for each of these neighborhoods consistently call for development and reinvestment that is in keeping with the natural and aesthetic qualities of the Connecticut River and preserve opportunities for public access to the riverfront. The expansion of the Basketball Hall of Fame within the West Columbus Urban Renewal District is also viewed by City officials as a catalyst for retail and tourism-oriented development.

In 1993, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission formed the regional Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway Task Force. PVPC secured a \$240,000 ISTEPA Enhancement grant in 1994, and the design and engineering of a 3.7 mile Connecticut Riverwalk in Springfield got underway. The Riverwalk was envisioned in PVPC's regional plan, the CONNECTICUT RIVER 2020 STRATEGY, as part of a 20-mile

regional Connecticut Riverwalk that would serve as an economic engine bringing recreation and tourism based development to the riverfront. PVPC secured a \$3.4 million grant to finance construction of Springfield's Riverwalk, which was completed in 2003 and is now open to the public.

Prior to the construction of the Connecticut Riverwalk, Riverfront Park was the city's main outdoor riverfront recreation site. The aged and deteriorated Riverfront Park is significantly underused due largely to difficult access and poor maintenance. Interstate 91 and the railroad create visual barriers to the park making it difficult for people to locate the park. Dense vegetation along the river obscures long-distance views from within the park. Collectively, these circumstances create the perception that there is a lack of personal safety when at the park. The City has developed design plans for the redevelopment of the Riverfront Park that include a boathouse and boating facility for rowboats, canoes and kayaks suited to the shallow waters in this area but actual construction is still many years away.



Connecticut Riverwalk, Springfield

Hartford's riverfront and the work of Riverfront Recapture provide a good model for the Springfield riverfront. Hartford has a beautiful system of trails and boating facilities along the river, and more visitors (694,000 visitors in 2003) come to the Hartford riverfront each year, than to the Basketball Hall of Fame (300,000 visitors in 2003). This illustrates how public river-related facilities can help drive economic growth, because there have been a number of new businesses along the waterfront in Hartford like the new conference center.



Riverfront access along Connecticut Riverwalk, Springfield

Recommended Action Strategies

A successful public-private partnership is needed to develop the riverfront along a basketball/sports theme. Many of the following recommendations are in the planning stages within the City.

1. Develop a new "Walk of Fame"

This walkway would parallel the Connecticut Riverwalk and would link the Basketball Hall of Fame to downtown Springfield via Riverfront Park. The Walk of Fame would feature basketball-shaped emblems for each Basketball Hall of Fame member, embedded in the pavement with shoe imprints. The walkway would encourage tourists and visitors to the Hall of Fame to visit the riverfront and downtown businesses, and vice versa. The Walk of Fame should link directly with the new Springfield Tourism Bureau. The Walk of Fame should be developed in partnership between the City of Springfield, the Basketball Hall of Fame, and corporate partners.



Riverfront Park, Springfield

2. Complete Riverfront Park Improvements

A complete renovation of Riverfront Park is planned by the Springfield Parks and Recreation Department, to be developed in cooperation with private business entities. Renovations would include:

- Boathouse/Restaurant Complex – a new rowing boathouse available for use by area colleges, youth groups and boat clubs, with a privately-operated riverfront restaurant and banquet facility which will be available for conferences, weddings and similar functions.
- Miniature golf course – a three season miniature golf course designed to reflect the riverfront’s natural setting and include elements of the Basketball Hall of Fame, on a three acre site.
- Festival Field improvements –the city plans to upgrade this site with a sound system, improved traffic control signals and provision of cross-walks from parking decks to increase the number of events which can be sponsored at the site, including outdoor concerts, craft fairs, auto shows, and art shows.

3. Develop Riverfront Entryways and Public Amenities with a Basketball Theme

The main pedestrian entryways linking downtown to the riverfront should be improved with designs and public art, using a basketball theme, to attract pedestrians to the riverfront. New lighting and street furniture should be installed along the riverfront, also using a basketball theme. Other improvements that should be undertaken by the city include new lighting and crosswalks.

4. Provide Increased Security and Public Events Programming for Riverfront

The Springfield riverfront currently suffers from poor public perception about safety. A very substantive change could be made to improve this image by establishing regular police patrols of the Riverwalk and Riverfront Park area to eliminate drug trafficking, prostitution and other problems in the area. Increased patrols should be widely publicized to encourage greater public use of the riverfront.

There is a strong need to increase public events programming for Riverfront Park and the Riverwalk, in order to bring families, downtown workers, and others to the riverfront. Activities could include: fishing derbies, boat regattas, running or bike races, rowing or kayaking races, and others. These activities would also help to displace the illicit activities noted above.



Basketball Hall of Fame, Springfield

5. Private Sector Role in Riverfront Economic Development

The Basketball Hall of Fame, sporting goods manufacturers, other corporations and small businesses are important partners to work with the City of Springfield in a successful riverfront redevelopment effort.

New retail and office space should be developed on the riverfront, designed to take advantage of the location of the Basketball Hall of Fame. First floor space should be designed to establish a sporting goods outlet center. Upper floors include space for corporate offices of sporting goods manufacturers.

Other businesses should be sought for the riverfront to build on and support the sports-tourism development theme for the riverfront. Considerations include a sports card museum and retail shop and an IMAX theater. Promotional sports events should be secured and marketed for the riverfront including the “3 on 3 Hoop It Up” basketball tournament, rowing races, fishing tournaments, bike races, and triathlons.

Springfield Riverfront Recreation Action Plan

Recommended Action	Key Tasks/Milestone(s)	Participants/Costs/Funding
PUBLIC SECTOR ELEMENTS OF RIVERFRONT STRATEGY		
1) Develop a Walk of Fame This facility would link the Basketball Hall of Fame to Riverfront Park and downtown with an attractive walkway adorned with pavers honoring inductees to the Hall of Fame.	a) Develop budget and preliminary design plans, including pavers for Hall of Fame members. b) Seek support and funding c) Develop final engineering and design plans d) Construct facility	<i>Participants:</i> PVPC, Springfield Parks Department, Basketball Hall of Fame <i>Cost estimate:</i> \$315,000 (1995) <i>Funding Sources:</i> Open Space Bond Basketball Hall of Fame City of Springfield Corporate Sponsors Sale of personalized paving bricks
2) Complete Springfield Riverfront Park Improvements Improvements will include boathouse/restaurant and banquet facility, miniature golf course operation, and an upgrade of Festival Field for concerts and other events.	a) Complete final engineering and design plans b) Identify business co-sponsor(s) to undertake commercial portions of project c) Secure funding d) Complete construction	<i>Participants:</i> Springfield Parks Department Business co-sponsor(s) <i>Cost estimate:</i> \$2,938,000 (1995) <i>Funding Sources:</i> Municipal bond Business co-sponsor Urban Self-Help Grant
3) Increased Security for Riverfront Establish regular patrols of riverfront to eliminate illicit activities.	a) Appropriate city funding. b) Establish regular police patrols.	<i>Participants:</i> City of Springfield <i>Cost estimate:</i> Unavailable <i>Funding Sources:</i> City of Springfield
4) Develop Riverfront Gateways and Public Amenities with a Basketball Theme Entrance facades, crosswalks, plazas, and public art should be developed at the State, Broad and Union Street entrances to encourage public use of the riverfront.	a) Develop design/engineering plans for crosswalks, entrance facades and public art b) Seek funding c) Complete construction	<i>Participants:</i> Springfield Parks Department Springfield Public Works Department Basketball Hall of Fame <i>Cost estimate:</i> \$703,000 (1995) <i>Funding Sources:</i> City of Springfield Urban Self-Help Grant ISTE Grant
5) Sponsor and Promote Riverfront Public Events To attract people back to the river, promotional events such as basketball tournaments, rowing races, bike races, triathalons, fishing derbies, and outdoor concerts should be programmed and sponsored.	a) Identify potential riverfront events and sponsors. Ideas include fishing derbies, boat regattas, running or bike races, rowing or kayaking races, and others. b) Establish a committee to oversee coordination of riverfront events. c) Seek funding and sponsorship. d) Coordinate events.	<i>Participants:</i> City of Springfield Basketball Hall of Fame Business Sponsors <i>Cost estimate:</i> Unavailable <i>Funding Sources:</i> City of Springfield Basketball Hall of Fame Business sponsors

Springfield Riverfront Recreation Action Plan (continued)

Recommended Action	Key Tasks/Milestone(s)	Participants/Costs/Funding
PRIVATE SECTOR ELEMENTS OF RIVERFRONT STRATEGY		
6) Develop a Corporate Sporting Goods Office and Outlet Center The riverfront, both north and south of the Basketball Hall of Fame, is an ideal location for development of sports-oriented specialty retail shops and outlet stores, and for corporate sporting goods office centers.	a) Preliminary design/engineering plans b) Establish private-public partnerships for joint efforts to develop riverfront with basketball theme c) Complete final design plans d) Implement construction	<i>Participants:</i> Basketball Hall of Fame Private businesses City of Springfield <i>Cost estimate:</i> Unavailable <i>Funding Sources:</i> Private investment Basketball Hall of Fame CDBG or Economic Development Grant
7) Develop Other Sports and Tourism-Oriented Businesses Other key ventures for the riverfront could include development of a sports card museum and outlet center, IMAX theater, bike and boat rental business, family athletic club, freshwater aquarium, tourist information center, arts and crafts center, and riverfront vendor kiosks.	a) Identify locations for facilities b) Establish partnership with city, other businesses for joint efforts to develop riverfront with basketball theme c) Complete design plans, including linkages to other riverfront sites (Riverfront Park, Riverwalk) d) Implement construction plans	<i>Participants:</i> Basketball Hall of Fame Private businesses City of Springfield <i>Cost estimate:</i> Unavailable <i>Funding Sources:</i> Basketball Hall of Fame Private investment CDBG or Economic Development Grant

Actions Taken to Date:

1) Connecticut River Clean-up

PVPC has secured and managed \$5.4 million in federal funds over six consecutive years of Congressional earmarks in the HUD/VA Appropriations Bills to fund the Connecticut River Clean-up project in five Massachusetts communities, including Springfield, as well as Hartford, CT. When local matches are included the total project value rises to **\$9.8 million**. In five communities in the Pioneer Valley region, total federal funding is \$4.3 million, and when local matches are included total project value rises to \$8 million. Springfield benefits from all of these expenditures, either directly in getting local CSO projects funded, or indirectly by getting a cleaner Connecticut River, since all CSO clean-up efforts are in Springfield or upstream communities. All federal funds come directly to PVPC and are distributed to communities through PVPC's Connecticut River Clean-up Committee.

Springfield's Water and Sewer Commission serves as the member of the Connecticut River Clean-up Committee. Springfield's share of funding has been \$1,398,603 in federal funds for a total project value of **\$2,542,914**. In Springfield, federal monies have funded the following projects: Mill River CSO clean-up; Systemwide Floatables Control; Water Quality Modeling and; and York Street Pumping Station modifications on the Connecticut River.

2) Connecticut River Walk and Bikeway

PVPC wrote grants to secure **\$3,633,512** in ISTE A Enhancement funds for Springfield for planning, engineering and construction of the 3.7 mile Connecticut Riverwalk in Springfield. PVPC envisioned the 20-mile regional Connecticut Riverwalk in Springfield, Agawam, Chicopee, West Springfield and Holyoke, completed the route planning in the early 1990's, and managed the design work in the late 1990's. PVPC secured and managed \$1,187,657 in engineering and design grants for the five involved communities and \$5.3 million construction grants for Springfield and Agawam. The Springfield and Agawam segments are now constructed and complete. The Riverwalk is fully handicapped accessible.

3) Springfield Gateways

PVPC wrote a successful ISTE A Enhancement grant application for \$835,920 for Springfield to fund engineering and design of new gateways linking the riverfront area to downtown in three locations. This grant was awarded, but MHD and Springfield have not yet negotiated a contract to begin work.

4) Riverwalk Amenities

PVPC wrote a successful ISTE A Enhancement grant application for \$192,795 for Springfield to fund construction of amenities, such as landscaping, banners, artwork and informational kiosks along the Connecticut Riverwalk. This grant was awarded, but MHD and Springfield have not yet negotiated a contract to begin work.

5) West Columbus Avenue Urban Renewal District Zoning

The City of Springfield has adopted the West Columbus Avenue Urban Renewal District, Section D-1400 of the Springfield Zoning Ordinance. This is an 18.2 acre district intended to accommodate the development of riverfront land located within the district for retail, commercial, cultural and entertainment activities, respectful of and in keeping with the natural and aesthetic qualities of the Connecticut River.

WEST SPRINGFIELD

RIVERFRONT RECREATION ACTION STRATEGY



Location for Connecticut Riverwalk and Riverfront Park, West Springfield

Summary of Issues and Opportunities

The Town of West Springfield is located on the west side of the Connecticut River. Its southern border adjoins the Westfield River which flows into a confluence with the Connecticut River. West Springfield, with a population of 27,537, is a mostly urbanized town consisting primarily of commercial and residential areas.

The Connecticut River fronts the entire eastern border of West Springfield. Like many nearby communities, however, most of West Springfield's riverfront is obscured by development and a major roadway (Route 5). There is also a dike system in West Springfield which prevents direct access to both the Connecticut and Westfield rivers.

In developing an action plan for West Springfield's Connecticut riverfront, the major objective should be creating areas along the river where people can access and enjoy the river.

There is a need for a riverfront park in West Springfield. The location targeted by the town to be a riverfront park is a good candidate for revitalization efforts. The site could provide picnic areas, a small boat access point, recreational fields, trails for walking and connection to the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway when it is completed.

Recommended Action Strategies

1. Develop a West Springfield Riverfront Park

A municipal riverfront park should be developed off Riverdale Street just below where Route I-91 crosses the Connecticut River. The area lies behind the Riverdale Shops and then opens up just below the dike after the Riverdale Shops. There is a rough parking lot and entrance at the intersection of Route 5 and Elm Street. The site's existing parking area needs improvements such



Entrance Gate, proposed Riverfront Park, West Springfield

as new paving, landscaping, signage, and lighting. The parking area leads to a large field which could be made into a playing field. A footpath could be developed leading from the parking area to the field and across a stream which would require the construction of a foot bridge.

Beyond the field is the area appropriate for a small boat access point into the river and an extensive floodplain forest leading back behind the Riverdale Shops and the dike. This floodplain forest could accommodate a foot trail which could extend from the parking lot at the riverfront park to the Riverdale Shops parking lot. The whole length of the riverfront park will access the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway which will be developed on the dike system.



View of proposed Riverfront Park
from Connecticut Riverwalk, West Springfield

2. *Development of the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway*

West Springfield should continue to participate in designing and securing funding to construct the segment of Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway along its flood control dike system. The Town must secure a Right-of-Way for the Connecticut Riverwalk in order to move the project forward and to have the project placed on the region's Transportation Improvement Plan for construction funding.

This 1.15-acre former Valley Land Fund parcel located just south of Hayes Avenue on the CT River is a prime location for river access. Hayes Avenue actually enters the river acting as a crude boat ramp; however, there is currently no parking for this site.

3. *Extend Connecticut Riverwalk to South and North*

There is potential in West Springfield to extend the proposed Connecticut Riverwalk from the Riverdale Shops area to both the north and south. To the south, the Riverwalk could be continued from the Riverdale Shops, as a bike lane along North Elm Street, linking back to the riverfront along Southworth and Elmdale Streets. (See map of recommended projects) At the North End Bridge, the Riverwalk could link to the Springfield section of the Connecticut Riverwalk, which is already constructed, and could also continue south along public land on the riverfront in West Springfield to the Memorial Bridge.



Location for Connecticut Riverwalk, West Springfield

To the north, the Riverwalk, could be continued along Route 5 to Holyoke's Springdale Park. There is also potential for an off-road section of the Riverwalk along the Connecticut Riverfront, near the Mass Turnpike.

4. *Create Recreational Fields at Riverfront*

Along the route of the proposed Connecticut Riverwalk, near the Ashley Avenue area, there is a large, open parcel of land located in the floodplain outside of the flood control dikes. Being in the floodplain, this parcel is undevelopable, but could be an excellent location for the development of recreational fields for soccer or baseball.

5. *Improve Links from Merrick Neighborhood to Riverfront*

The Merrick neighborhood lies along the Connecticut River in southern West Springfield, but is cut off from the river by Route 5. This low income and working class neighborhood has few recreational amenities, and could benefit from river access for fishing and a riverfront walking/biking path. The town should investigate the potential for linkage to between the Merrick neighborhood and the riverfront, perhaps near the existing CSX railroad bridge over Route 5.

West Springfield Riverfront Recreation Action Plan

Recommended Action	Key Tasks/Milestone(s)	Participants/Costs/Funding
1) Development of a West Springfield Riverfront Park: A riverfront park off of Riverdale Street in West Springfield would improve recreation opportunities and appreciation of the Connecticut River, and provide the town's only riverfront access. It would connect to the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway and would provide opportunities for fishing, swimming, hiking picnicking and passive recreation.	a) Secure ownership or easement of needed parcels not currently owned by the town. b) Develop design and engineering plans for the park. c) Apply for construction funding from appropriate grant programs. d) Complete construction of the riverfront park. e) Develop a long-term maintenance plan and budget for the park.	<i>Participants:</i> Town of West Springfield PVPC <i>Cost estimate:</i> Unavailable <i>Funding Sources:</i> Public Access Board Town of West Springfield Urban Self-Help Big E Foundation
2) Development of the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway: West Springfield should complete plans and construct the segment of Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway along its flood control dike system.	a) Complete engineering and design plans. b) Complete feasibility study to determine potential for linking West Springfield to other Riverwalk segments. c) Seek addition of the Riverwalk to the region's Transportation Improvement Program. d) Seek construction funding for Riverwalk e) Complete construction of the Riverwalk.	<i>Participants:</i> PVPC Town of West Springfield Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway Task Force <i>Cost estimate:</i> Unavailable <i>Funding Sources:</i> ISTEA Enhancement grant Federal funding earmark Town of West Springfield
3) Extend Connecticut Riverwalk to South and North	a) Investigate options for extending the Connecticut Riverwalk to the south and north, potentially along Route 5, as part of the reconstruction of Route 5.	<i>Participants:</i> Town of West Springfield PVPC <i>Cost estimate:</i> Unavailable <i>Funding Sources:</i> ISTEA Enhancement grant Town of West Springfield
4) Create Recreational Fields at Riverfront	a) Acquire riverfront lands for recreational use. b) Develop design plans for recreational fields. c) Secure construction funding.	<i>Participants:</i> Town of West Springfield PVPC <i>Cost estimate:</i> Unavailable <i>Funding Sources:</i> Self-help grant Town of West Springfield
5) Connecticut Riverwalk Extension and Link to Merrick Neighborhood	a) Extend the Connecticut Riverwalk south along the riverfront east of Route 5, from the North End Bridge rotary to the Memorial Bridge rotary. Investigate the potential for linking the Merrick neighborhood to the riverfront, near the North End Bridge rotary.	<i>Participants:</i> Town of West Springfield PVPC <i>Cost estimate:</i> Unavailable <i>Funding Sources:</i> ISTEA Enhancement grant Town of West Springfield



Potential site for recreational fields and Connecticut Riverwalk, West Springfield

Actions Taken to Date:

1) Development of a New West Springfield Riverfront Park:

- Meetings held between PVPC, West Springfield Planning Department, and Town Manager to discuss plans for new riverfront park.
- Identification of private property owners within area of potential park.
- Discussions with owners of private property regarding potential sale, lease or easement agreements.

2) Development of the Connecticut RiverWalk and Bikeway and Spur Trails:

- Town and PVPC received an ISTE A Enhancement grant of \$184,200 to complete design and engineering plans for the Riverwalk.
- Design and engineering plans have reached the 25% design stage.
- The Town has acquired the former Valley Land Fund parcel in the Hayes/Bacon Avenue neighborhood and the former Colebrook parcel along the riverfront.
- The Town is working to acquire other needed riverfront parcels.

3) Extend Connecticut Riverwalk to South and North:

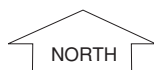
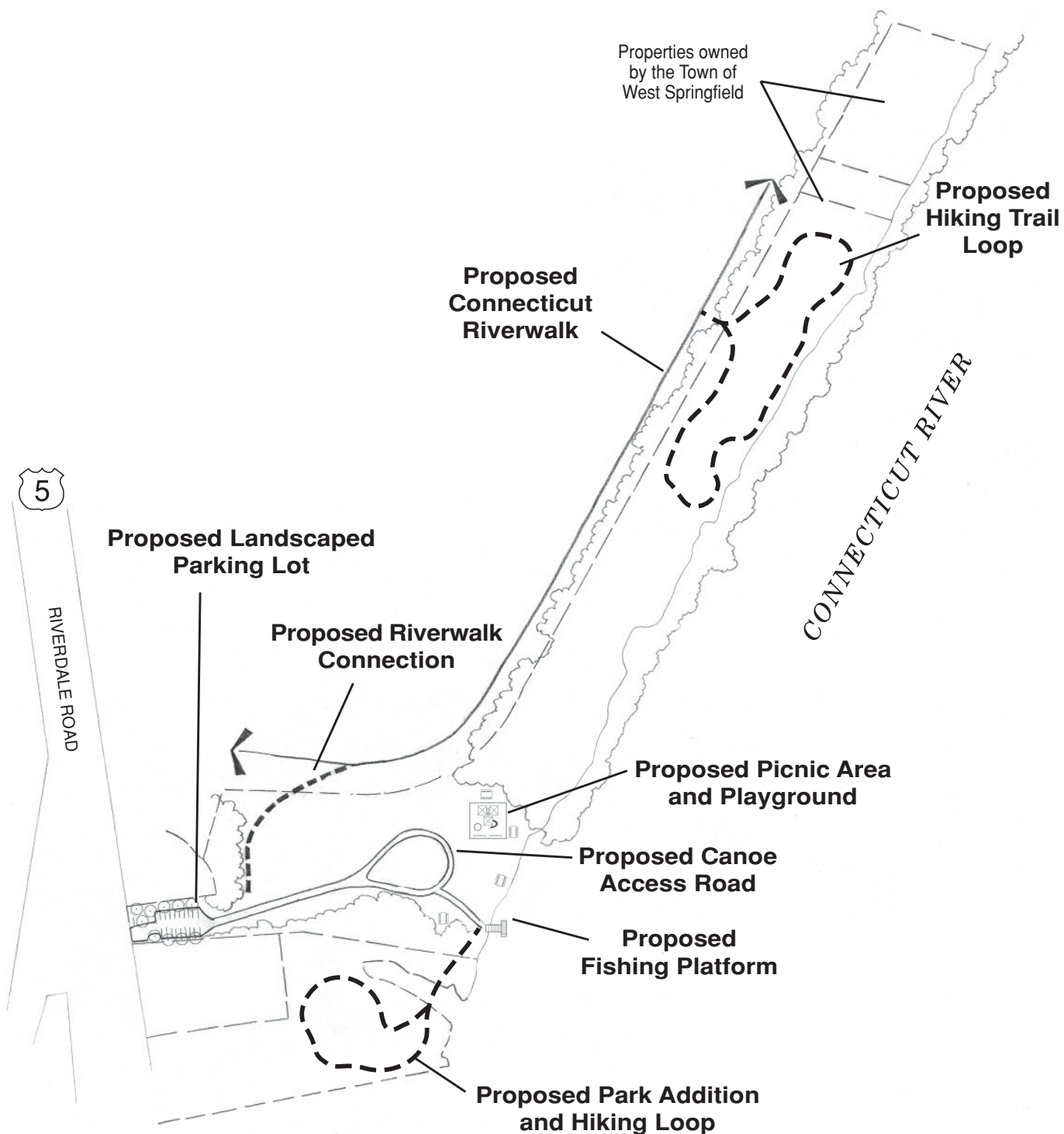
- Preliminary investigations indicate that there are potential areas for linkages to the north and south.
- As part of the planned Route 5 reconstruction project, the Town has requested that MassHighway include wider sidewalks along Route 5 between Bacon/Hayes and the Holyoke city line.

4) Create Recreational Fields at Riverfront

- Plans for Riverwalk have been developed, indicating a potential site for recreational fields along the riverfront.

5) Improve Links from Merrick Neighborhood to Riverfront

- Plans for redevelopment of the Merrick Neighborhood have been completed by a consultant to the Town.



Approximate Scale: 1 inch = 350 feet

RIVERSIDE PARK
WEST SPRINGFIELD, MA